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# RUSSIAN MUSIC

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE RISE  
AND PROGRESS OF THE RUSSIAN  
SCHOOL OF COMPOSERS, WITH  
A SURVEY OF THEIR LIVES AND  
A DESCRIPTION OF THEIR WORKS

BY

M. MONTAGU-NATHAN

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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## PREFACE.

WHEN this history was embarked upon the British public had hitherto manifested but a slight interest in Russian music, and the output of modern Russian composers was regarded as a bypath remote from the great main road of the art. In the comparatively short interval since the commencement of this work (at the close of 1912) a remarkable change has taken place and there is now to be observed a widespread and ever increasing curiosity in regard to Russian music of all kinds—a spirit of inquiry not confined to the public of the European mainland but which happily is as keen in Great Britain as anywhere.

Music-lovers have apparently resolved to make amends for their long neglect of the Russian school by taking every opportunity of performing or listening to Slavonic music and at the same time by seeking all the available knowledge in respect of those masters whose names are linked with the glories of both the Moscow and the St. Petersburg schools of composition.

But while the demand for information has become more and more insistent the supply has remained sur-

prisingly meagre and fitful. From time to time the newspapers have devoted space to articles treating of individual Russian composers or to a study of some particular composition, but no one volume has as yet been dedicated to the purpose of giving a connected account of the rise and progress of the Russian school of musicians.

The present book has been undertaken with no other object than to fill a gap which though for a long time ignored has now made itself apparent to many musicians and music-lovers.

In a work of this character it is obviously impossible to include a comprehensive survey of operas such as those belonging to what I have called the pre-Nationalist period. And, indeed, when my early chapters were written—at a date prior to the inaugural season of Russian opera at Drury Lane—there did not seem to be the faintest likelihood that Dargomijsky's "Rus-salka" would ever be performed in England. As this work, however, has now figured in some of the preliminary announcements of the approaching season, I am inserting its plot in an appendix.

I have now to make my acknowledgments to Mrs Rosa Newmarch, whose writings on various Russian musical and literary subjects have been an unfailing source of assistance; to Mr. M-D. Calvocoressi, whose contribution to the literature of Russian music has very greatly aided me; and to Mr. Edwin Evans, junior, to whom I am indebted for my first introduction to the Russian school of composition.

LONDON, *May, 1914.*



# CONTENTS.

|                        | PAGE |
|------------------------|------|
| INTRODUCTION . . . . . | I    |

---

## PART I.

### THE PRE-NATIONALISTS.

|                                       |    |  |
|---------------------------------------|----|--|
| I. VOLKOFF, BEREZOVSKY, BORTNIANSKY   | ✓  |  |
| AND VERSTOVSKY . . . . .              | 4  |  |
| ✓II. GLINKA. "A LIFE FOR THE CZAR" .. | 9  |  |
| III. "RUSSLAN AND LUDMILLA" ... ..    | 20 |  |
| ✓IV. DARGOMIJSKY . . . . .            | 30 |  |
| V. "THE STONE GUEST" AND "THE FIVE"   | 38 |  |
| VI. SEROFF AND LVOFF . . . . .        | 45 |  |

---

## PART II.

### THE NATIONALISTS.

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| I. BALAKIREFF . . . . .           | 63  |
| II. CÉSAR CUI ... ..              | 74  |
| III. BORODIN . . . . .            | 86  |
| ✓IV. MOUSSORGSKY . . . . .        | 108 |
| V. "BORIS GODOUNOFF" . . . . .    | 131 |
| VI. "KHOVANTCHINA" . . . . .      | 151 |
| VII. THE LAST PHASE ... ..        | 167 |
| ✓VIII. RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF . . . . . | 179 |

## PART III

## THE DECLINE OF NATIONALISM.

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I. GLAZOUNOFF ... ..                                      | 239  |
| II. LIADOFF AND LIAPOUNOFF ... ..                         | 250  |
| III. ARENSKY ... ..                                       | 255  |
| XIV. TCHAIKOVSKY, RUBINSTEIN AND THE EC-<br>LECTICS .. .. | 260  |
| XV. TANEIEFF .. ..  | 274  |

---

## PART IV

## THE PRESENT MOVEMENT

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| ✓ I. RACHMANINOFF ... ..                    | 281 |
| II. GLIÈRE AND IPPOLITOFF-IVANOFF ...       | 287 |
| III. SCRIABIN ... ..                        | 292 |
| IV. VASSILENKO AND GRECHANINOFF ...         | 299 |
| V. AKIMENKO, TCHEREPNIN AND REBIKOFF        | 303 |
| ✓ VI. STEINBERG, MEDTNER AND CATOIRE ...    | 307 |
| XVII. STRAVINSKY ... ..                     | 311 |
| XVIII. OPERATIC AND CONCERT ENTERPRISES ... | 317 |

---

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| APPENDIX I ... .. | 325 |
| APPENDIX II .. .. | 335 |

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# A SHORT HISTORY OF RUSSIAN MUSIC

## INTRODUCTION.

THERE is every sign that the music of Russia is coming into its own. The circumstances of its earlier discovery by France is perhaps due, to some extent, to the fact that there is a literature of the subject in the language of that country—there have, at any rate, been concerts from time to time in Paris which have been devoted to the music of Russia and which partook, in some cases, of the nature of festivals. In 1844 Berlioz conducted a concert in which several fragments from Glinka's operas were played, and later Glinka himself gave a concert of which the programme consisted entirely of works from his own pen. During the Paris exhibitions of 1878, 1889 and 1900, special attention was paid to the creations of Russian composers, while in 1907 there was held in the French metropolis a veritable festival of Russian music, chiefly operatic. Festivals of concert music have also been held in Belgium—in 1885 at Antwerp,

under the direction of Borodin, at Liege under the presidency of Cui, and at Brussels in 1890 with Rimsky-Korsakoff as conductor.

In Great Britain, however, interest in Russian music is the result rather of sporadic efforts. Sir Henry J. Wood has succeeded in familiarising the works of Tchaikovsky and has given isolated performances of many works by other Russian composers, and in 1909 Mr. Kussewitsky, the celebrated contra-bassist, gave a series of concerts for the purpose of bringing forward some worthy compositions by his compatriots, but there does not appear to have been any organised attempt to bring the intelligence of the existence of the school as a whole within the public ken. The visits of the Russian ballet which seem likely to become annual have not affected to any large extent the interest in Russian music, because to the general public the literary interest of these ballets has been predominant at the expense of the music. Quite recently in a newspaper notice of a ballet, the music to which was originally conceived and is habitually presented in symphonic form, by which indeed the ballet itself is inspired, the composer's contribution was dismissed as a mere appendage of the drama in spite of its being one of the chief works of one of the most celebrated of Russian composers. Other proofs that the few seeds sown in England have fallen upon more or less barren ground are not wanting. In 1913 the Philharmonic Society has allowed the performance of a symphony originally brought forward by Mr. Kussewitsky in 1909 to be announced as the first performance in England, and during its rehearsal I was questioned by a prominent professional musician as to

the nationality of its composer, who is quite the most remarkable and certainly the most notorious product of the Russian school.

Because the contemporary Russian composer is by way of usurping the established prerogative of the French musician, that of seeking a new harmonic basis, and because the names of Scriabin and Stravinsky are associated chiefly with attempts to break down all the formalistic barriers, there is a danger that the music of the founders of the Russian school will come to be regarded as old-fashioned and will be relegated to the category of the archival before the intelligence as to the actual initiation of that school and of its influence has been chronicled in such shape as will allow of ready access to the general musical public.

By means of the following chapters it is hoped at least to minimise such a danger.\*

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\* Since this introduction was written a season of Russian opera at Drury Lane Theatre has been the means of arousing a lively interest in Russian music and has brought forth a considerable amount of fragmentary information.



foreigners during the reign of Peter the Great, was pervaded by Dutch, French and German words. Trediakovsky was succeeded in this undertaking by Michael Lomonossov (1711-65) who is credited with the achievement of having constructed and tuned an instrument which was ultimately to serve as a fit medium of expression for the poetic genius of Pushkin, the great national singer. The musical art in Russia was destined to be the subject of a similar process of emancipation. It was not until after the death of the Empress Anne (1730-40) who had engaged in 1735 an Italian opera company under the direction of Francesco Araya, at that time famous as a composer, that efforts in a nationalistic direction were made, first by the Empress Elizabeth (1741-61) who formed a company of Russian native singers and subsequently by Catherine the Great (1761-96) who carried on this work and caused representations to be given of many operas by Russian composers. This must not, however, be invested with too great a significance, seeing that although these operas were by native composers and were sung in the vernacular, the flavour of the music was still thoroughly Italian. The composers here referred to are Volkoff, whose opera, "Tanioucha," is credited with being the earliest musical work having in any sense a Russian character; Fomine, for one of whose works, "Matinsky," Catherine herself supplied the libretto; Titoff, whose endeavours were also in part nationalistic, and Cavo, who, though Venetian by birth, lived for forty-five years in Russia and assimilated in a considerable degree the tincture of the Slav temperament.

But there was a certain activity, in another musical

sphere, which was destined to have a gréat influence upon the future. The choir of the Imperial Chapel which had been suppressed after the death of Peter the Great, was revived during the reign of Anne. The first musician to produce great results from this choir was Maxim Soznovich Perezovsky (1745-77), who is regarded as one of the fathers of the art of religious music in Russia. The beauty of his voice and his aptitude for composition when a boy attracted the attention of Catherine, who sent him to Bologna where he studied for several years under the guidance of the then celebrated Padré Martini. Returning to his native country he applied himself to the composition of devotional works and did his utmost to initiate some necessary reforms in the Greco-Russian church service. His early death is attributed to the chagrin consequent on the failure of these endeavours. That the failure was not total is evident from the fact that he is to-day considered as one of the most gifted composers known to the history of Russian sacred music.

Dmitri Stepanovich Bortniansky (1751-1825), who was destined to succeed and somewhat to outshine him, was ten years his junior. He, also, owed the attention of his royal mistress to the quality of his soprano voice, and he was hardly seven years of age when by favour of the Empress Elizabeth he was placed under Galuppi, at that time master of the imperial music at St. Petersburg. At the departure of Galuppi from Russia in 1768 Catherine, who was unwilling that the boy's talent should fall short of fruition, sent him after his master to Venice, whence, at Galuppi's suggestion, he subsequently proceeded to Bologna. During a long stay in Italy he composed a



large number of works in the Italian style, both sacred and secular. On his return, however, to St Petersburg in 1779, when he was immediately appointed principal of the Imperial Chapel, he took up the cause of the national in his art. Cognisant that the section of Little Russia, known as the Ukraine, was by virtue of its clement climate a prolific source of good voices he went to that district for all his choristers, and by dint of careful and enthusiastic training he assembled a choir of such vocal excellence that its traditions and its ideals have been carried on to the present time, when the Imperial Choir is an object of admiration to all foreign musicians privileged to hear it. Instrumental music is not permitted in the Greek Church, and it is to the circumstances of being obliged to sing unaccompanied by an instrument that the Russian choir singer owes his facility in maintaining pitch. During the ensuing period there were several more or less tentative efforts toward the establishment of a national movement for which, however, the time was hardly ripe. It was during this, the golden period of Russian literature, in the reign of Nicholas I, that Alexis Nicholaevich Verstovsky (1799-1862) composed and produced an opera which attained considerable popularity: "The Tomb of Askold." He wrote in all six operas but the one mentioned eclipsed all the others in popular favour, so much so as to receive, in the first twenty-five years of its existence, six hundred performances in St. Petersburg and Moscow alone. Alexander Nicholaevich Alabieff, who appeared a little later (1802-52) is better known by his songs than by his one operatic venture, especially by "The Nightingale," which used often to figure in the

"lesson scene" in the "Barber of Seville." The success of Verstovsky was due rather to the abundance of pleasing melody which graced his operas than to any special talent either for dramatic effect or ingenuity of instrumentation.

It was not until the advent of Glinka's "A Life for the Czar" in 1836 that the Russian school can really be said to have been inaugurated.

## II.

### GLINKA

#### "A LIFE FOR THE CZAR."

MICHAEL IVANOVICH GLINKA (1803-57), was born on May 20 (June 2\*) at the village of Novospasskoi, in the government of Smolensk, on the estate belonging to his father, a retired army officer. He showed signs at an early age of the possession of an extremely nervous disposition and a lively aptitude for music. His father was well-disposed toward the art and did nothing to stifle his son's affection for it; his grandmother, who was responsible for his early upbringing, being an invalid herself, fell naturally into the error of molly-coddling the boy, with the result that he never succeeded in throwing off an inherent hypochondriacal tendency. His father was not particularly well off, but his mother's brother was blessed with sufficient substance to be able to afford the upkeep of a private band. When the

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\* The Russians have not yet accepted the change in the calendar made by Pope Gregory XIII in the year 1582. The alteration was adopted by England in 1751.

Glinka's entertainment of this band was lent to them by him, and it is to this early association with music of the best class that young Michael owed the development of his taste. Of the music of the people he heard plenty, and his timely assimilation of the folk-song style is to be held as the chief cause of the germination of his adult passion for the national ideal. The case of the Russian school which was to come is analogous with that of Glinka. Prior to its inception the music of the populace may be said to have been confined to that of folk-song, of which the Russian empire boasts such a wealth. The domain of Russian popular song is extraordinarily vast, and voices sentiments relating both to an enormous territorial tract and a remarkable diversity of idea. There are songs of mythical gods, of fabulous mortals, ancestral epics, songs, heroic and tender, and rhapsodies upon the subjects (and regarding the objects) of love and hate. The Russian empire stretching from the Baltic coast to Persia, from the boundaries of Turkey to the Arctic circle, comprises in its people an immense variety of race, and as may be imagined, the climatic differences are no inconsiderable factor in the varied character of these songs. The songs of the north are as different from those of the southern peoples as are the folk themselves. As is natural, the art of song flourishes to the greater extent in the southern portion of the empire, and it has been said of the Slavs, whenever at work and whenever resting, they sing of the road, of the river, of the prairie, of the forest, of the corn, of the open air, of the fireside, both in single voices and in concert, as occasion serves. Just as we are told by himself of Glinka's determination to make this

treasury of national song the fount of national music, so the Russian school, who were his direct descendants, were imbued with this same idea of deriving as much thematic substance as possible from the same origin, and thus preserving the national character in their music.' Mr. Melchior de Vogüé, whose essays on "The Russian Novel" were published during the year 1883, said therein that when Russia should beget some serious musicians these songs should provide an unlimited source of inspiration. The tardiness of this pronouncement goes to emphasise what has often been remarked and what was the subject of frequent complaint by Tchaïkovsky: that very little was known in Russia of the Russian school at a moment when it was, in reality, in full strength X

Glinka took his earliest lessons on the piano under the paternal roof from his governess. In 1817 he went to a boarding-school in St Petersburg, where he remained until 1822, and where he received further piano tuition from John Field himself. He also studied the violin with Boehm,\* who is said to have found him an unpromising pupil. In 1822 he made his first essay in composition, one of his five *vaises* for piano and a set of variations, of which he wrote in all eight. He seems to have spent these years in profitable fashion, for during this period he exercised a natural faculty for acquiring foreign languages, which is a Slav characteristic, and mastered Latin, French, German, English and Persian. He also paid a particular attention to the subjects of geography and zoology. A fact

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\* Not to be confounded with the teacher of Joachim who lived in Vienna.

that may account for some weaknesses in his music is that despite the seriousness of his attitude towards the art he did not undergo a regular theoretical course until some years after this.

His health was never of the best, and in 1823 he had a nervous breakdown which necessitated a change of scene, and he made a tour of the Caucasus and took the cure which the waters of that country are supposed to offer. On his return home he prosecuted his musical studies with an ardour the renewal of which he traced to the effect of the sulphur in these waters. He recounts in his memoirs how he took his uncle's orchestra in hand and rehearsed each section with the dual purpose of rendering justice to the work in hand and of familiarising himself with the masterpieces with which he came thus to make acquaintance. In this way he was able to study in detail some symphonies and overtures of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Cherubini and Méhul. In 1824 his studies were somewhat intermittent, as he had not at that time considered music as a life career. He secured a position in a government department, and took up residence in St. Petersburg. But the fact of having less opportunity for study did not cause any diminution of his passion for the musical art, and in 1828 he decided to avail himself of an offer of an allowance from his family to devote himself entirely to music. During his employment by the State, in spite of a natural timidity, he threw himself amongst the world, choosing the most cultured acquaintances, and mixed with a variety of young men who were congenial to him on account of their artistic proclivities. Among these were Prince Galitzin, whose son became such an untiring pro-

pagandist of the cause of Russian music, and Count Wielhorski, who was also imbued with the desire to advance its prospects, which project he carried out in practical fashion by giving some notable concerts. Another member of the circle was Alexis Tolstoy, the poet. One and all were determined to take every opportunity of propitiating the muses in one form or another, and they pursued this ideal with an enthusiasm bordering on frenzy. From Glinka's memoirs we learn some details as to these miniature festivals, or perhaps one should say, orgies of music. One of them took the form of a sort of musical water carnival at which a chorus of Boieldieu, who had spent eight years in Russia as conductor of the Imperial Opera, was performed. For another he composed the "Slavsia," which apotheosis of the fatherland was destined to become the most popular number in his "Life for the Czar." At a third he took the part of Donna Anna in a translated version of Mozart's "Don Juan." At an "evening" given by the Princess Stroganoff, who lived in the district of Novgorod, over a hundred and fifty miles from St. Petersburg, he played Figaro in "The Barber."

As time went on Glinka perceived that this round of pleasures, of an artistic nature though they were, did very little towards effecting a practical musical advancement, and at the same time he found himself once again under the necessity of paying some regard to the claims of physical well-being. In the spring of 1830 he accordingly left Russia for Italy, paying a short visit to Germany *en route*, in company with a famous singer, Ivanoff by name, whose talents were fostered, thanks to the material assistance of the Czar

Nicholas I.\* Glinka settled for a year in Milan, where he studied with Basil, director of the Conservatoire. He became acquainted with Donizetti and Bellini, and not only familiar with, but considerably influenced by their music. He witnessed the first public representation of "La Sonnambula," and arranged and published fantasias upon its themes as well as of those of other operas of the same stamp. He then spent a few months at Naples, but it is evident from his autobiography that he was constantly hearing the "call" of Russia. Finally his artistic nature responded, and it was at this time that the idea of creating a truly Russian type of music really seized upon his imagination and became a firm intention which was not abandoned. He still felt that his theoretical knowledge was insufficient, and on his way back to Russia he went for a few months once more to Berlin, where he placed himself under the celebrated Dehn, who, twelve years later, became the teacher of Anton Rubinstein. Dehn saw the folly and futility of putting a man of twenty-nine back to the very first rung, and instead set to work to reduce the chaos of promiscuously acquired knowledge to some sort of order, taking his pupil through a rapid survey of the essentials of musical theory and of the practice of composition. All this time Glinka was haunted by the one idea of qualifying as the prophet of Russian music. In a letter to one of his St. Petersburg friends he mentions this idea, and lays stress upon the con-

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\* Ivanoff became eminent in Italy and contracted a firm friendship with Rossini. He subsequently incurred the displeasure of his royal patron by forsaking Russia to which he never returned.



dition that the opera which he had resolved to attempt must not only be Russian by virtue of its Russian subject, but its musical substance. He insists that the work must be thoroughly *national*. He wishes to figure before his compatriots as a true Russian artist, and before foreigners as a poet singing his country and his race, and not, in his own words, as a jay bedecked with the plumage of birds of another feather. In 1834, on the death of his father, he returned to Russia. Domiciled once more in St. Petersburg with a former friend, he found no difficulty in gathering up the dropped threads of his artistic acquaintance, and was soon the centre of an intellectual circle which included Pushkin, Gogol and Joukovsky, the fine flower, that is to say, of contemporary Russian literature, men who indeed were destined to bear the greatest names in the literary history of the empire. To these men the idea of nationalising the artistic product of their fatherland was entirely congenial, and Glinka received every possible encouragement.

It was Joukovsky, virtually the leader of the circle, who proposed to Glinka the subject of the heroic and patriotic deed of Ivan Soussanin as libretto for an opera. Such it became, and thus it is that the name of Ivan Soussanin is more familiar to Russians as the hero of Glinka's opera, "A Life for the Czar," than as a figure in Russian history. The circumstances which form the plot of the libretto are taken from a page in the annals of the Russian empire, which has but recently been the subject of commemoration at the tercentenary of the Romanoff dynasty. In 1613 the Poles invaded Russia, and, not content with threatening the throne of the newly-elected Michael Romanoff,

actually plotted against the Royal life. Several of the Polish chieftains, ignorant of the whereabouts of the monarch, approached Ivan Soussanin, a peasant, and without disclosing their identity and their plans, solicited his aid as guide in their search for the Royal person. Ivan, suspecting treason, elected to sacrifice his life for that of his sovereign and country, and, having sent his adopted son, Vania, to warn the Czar of the dangers surrounding him, engaged himself to the Poles and led them into the depths of a labyrinthine forest from which they could not possibly retrace their road. The Poles, on perceiving the deception, turned on Soussanin and speedily put him to death.

Glinka was not slow to recognise the merits of this story. Its epic character, its pathos and its potentialities as to national colour, both dramatic and musical, all appealed to him with immediate force, and he set to work to put the idea into such shape as would fit it for a theatrical purpose. Joukovsky was the tutor to the Royal family, and he suggested Baron Rosen, the Royal secretary, as librettist. The latter was readily accepted in this capacity by Glinka, who asked nothing better than to proceed at once with the work of realising his life's ambition. Rosen, who was a German, does not seem to have been quite so zealous, and the fact that Glinka had frequently to re-arrange his music to suit the words which should, properly speaking, have inspired it, is held to account for certain flaws in the relation of the libretto to the music. Glinka's notion, too, of contrasting Polish and Russian musical themes for the purpose of a musical portrayal of the conflicting nationalities did not occur

to him until after the libretto was begun, and on this account, too, the homogeneity of the work was somewhat marred.

The prejudicial obstacles with which the path of creative genius is so often strewn were not absent in Glinka's case, and for some time the management of the Imperial Opera refused to allow the work to be performed. But Glinka was able to bring the most powerful influences to bear, and in 1836 "A Life for the Czar" was given its first public performance with magnificent success, and the genuine Russian operatic school was an accomplished fact. It achieved immediate popularity, the only dissentients being a few aristocrats who complained that the music was founded upon plebeian airs.\* It is not difficult to realise what must have been the effect upon a public accustomed to and sated with the conventionalised inanities of Italian opera, of such scenes as, for instance, that constituting the second act: the brilliant spectacle of the Polish camp in full *fête* and the gorgeous climax created by the pageant of the Emperor's royal progress through his capital. The interest of the stage-play, as well as inspiring the composer to a superb effort, kindled the patriotic flame of the Russian people to an extent unprecedented in the annals of the Russian theatre.

It must not be supposed, however, that Glinka had been able entirely to rid himself of the effect of his sojourn in Italy, and it is indeed more than likely that the alloyage of an occasional Italian flavour,

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\* It is interesting to note that the greatest living exponent of the rôle of Soussanin is of the humblest origin.

especially in the concerted vocal numbers, with the nationalistic character of the whole, was responsible for the immediate success of the work with the people. There was nevertheless a certain originality of writing which was the expression of Glinka's own musical individuality, and which voiced its needs. It would be difficult to trace the use of bars of five and seven beats to any outside or previous influence, and it should be noted that this rhythmic freedom was, for some little time at all events, confined as a characteristic to the Russian school. /César Cui, who has contributed so much to the literature of the subject, points out a weakness in "A Life for the Czar" which can easily be understood. He calls attention to the comparative awkwardness with which the Polish music is fitted into the whole, and further, that it is all of a conventional and superficial pattern. It consists, he says, of polonaises and mazurkas, and protests that Polish nationality is expressible in other terms and by other means than that of a succession of songs in these rhythms. He rounds off his criticism, however, by allowing that the fusion of inspiration and creative power evinced in the composition of "A Life for the Czar" was of an order which justifies the placing of Glinka amongst the greatest composers. Whatever criticism may have been levelled at certain imperfections in Glinka's masterpiece, it is abundantly clear that it enjoyed an extraordinary popularity. In December, 1879, it reached its five hundredth performance, and in November, 1886, a special representation was given, not only at St. Petersburg, but in every Russian town boasting a theatre, in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of its first production. At Mos-

cow it was actually given at two theatres simultaneously. The occasion was invested with national importance. A history of the opera was published which contained a picture of a statue of Glinka which had been erected at Smolensk, near the composer's birth-place, some years previously. It will be seen that the popular acclamation of this symbol of the birth of the Russian school was equalled by the intensity of feeling which prevailed at its commemoration—a remarkable testimony to the artistic judgment as well as to the fidelity of the Russian people.

### III.

#### "RUSSLAN AND LUDMILLA."

ONE of the fruits of the success sustained by the production of "A Life for the Czar" was the appointment of Glinka as director of the Imperial Chapel Choir, and in that capacity he paid visits to Little Russia and to Finland in search of new voices. It will be remembered that it was from Little Russia that were recruited the singers who originally assisted in establishing the fame of this choral body. It was whilst on these journeys that Glinka collected some musical material for his second opera, "Russlan and Ludmilla." This work was based upon one of the earliest poems of the famous poet, Pushkin, of which the subject was a fairy tale. Glinka applied to Pushkin himself for a dramatised version, but hardly had the poet accepted the invitation, when he was killed in a duel arising out of the supposititious infidelity of his wife. Not until shortly before breathing his last, was Pushkin assured of her innocence.

Glinka, who had been married since 1835, himself suffered at this time from domestic misunderstanding which culminated in separation, and this circumstance, together with that of his having employed no less than five librettists as substitutes for the single hand of Pushkin, is held to have been contributory to a certain weakness in the "book" of "Russlan." Its combined authorship is in a sense comparable with the battalion of names so often to be found on the title page of English musical comedies, and the literary content of the opera suffers naturally enough from a certain disunity and from a lack of dramatic cohesion. Musically, the homogeneity of "Russlan" is interfered with by a sort of prophetic "Russification" which was nevertheless the means of giving full scope to the eclecticism of its composer. Thus while some of his score is couched in true Russian vein, it contains sections on the one hand of a semi-Oriental and on the other of a Tartar character. Further, as the outcome of his visit to Finland, he was able to give to the music of Finn, the wizard, the particular territorial flavour demanded by the circumstance that the magician of Russian legends is invariably of Finnish origin. Altogether the musical characterisation, the music itself and the orchestration are of a very much riper quality than that of "A Life for the Czar," and in uniting the best features of the Italian, French and German schools with his own individual genius Glinka succeeded in creating a work of a high order—one which embraced some epoch-making innovations.

The plot of "Russlan and Ludmilla," consisting as it does of a gallimaufry of characters and incidents,

is not easily reducible to coherency. The first act opens with an entertainment held by Svietosar, Grand Duke of Kieff, in honour of the suitors of his daughter Ludmilla: Russlan, valiant knight, Ratmir, Oriental dreamer and poet, and Farlaf, coward and braggart. Russlan enjoys the preference. During a chorus in propitiation of Lell, god of matrimony, the festivities are interrupted by a thunderclap and a sudden darkness, and when light returns it is seen that Ludmilla has been carried off. Svietosar, her father, promises her hand to the rescuer. The second act takes us to the cave of Finn, the wizard, to whom Russlan has repaired for advice. Russlan, hearing that Ludmilla's abduction is the work of Tchernomor, the dwarf, and having been warned against the machinations of Naina, a wicked fairy, goes on his search. The scene is changed and discovers Farlaf in consultation with Naina, who persuades him to neglect Ludmilla until she has been found by Russlan, and then to carry her off afresh. After a further change of scene, Russlan is seen on an old and mist-enveloped battle-field where he finds a lance and a shield. The mist clears and reveals a gigantic head which, in order to harass Russlan, creates, by means of its brobdingnagian breathing-apparatus, a storm; the knight overcomes the head with a stroke of his lance and finds beneath it the magic sword destined to secure for him a victory over Tchernomor. The head explains that its inglorious isolation is due to the treachery of the dwarf, who is its brother, and explains the use of the avenging sword.

The third act passes in the enchanted palace of Naina and introduces Gorislava, who loves Ratmir.



The latter appears but is enchanted by some comely maidens who belong to Naina's court, and turns a deaf ear to Gorislava's entreaties. But for the timely interference of Finn, Russlan, who also comes on the scene, would himself succumb to the influence of the sirens.

The fourth act is placed in the dwelling of the villainous Tchernomor. Ludmilla is here found inconsolable in face of all distraction proffered her. Fatigue finally brings sleep. She is awakened by Tchernomor, who enters, followed by his suite and his slaves. He seats himself at Ludmilla's side and gives the signal for a divertissement. This is interrupted by the arrival of Russlan, and Tchernomor, who, as a hasty precaution, plunges Ludmilla into a deep trance, advances to meet the knight in combat. Russlan is the victor, but is unable to awaken Ludmilla. On the advice of Gorislava and Ratmir, who come to his aid, he carries off the sleeping Ludmilla in the direction of Kieff.

In the fifth act, whilst Ratmir is taking his night watch over the party of travellers, the benevolent Finn appears and gives him a magic ring with which to break Tchernomor's spell. The scene changes back to the palace of Svietosar, and the deferred abduction by Farlaf takes place. He in turn is baffled by Ludmilla's trance, and flies in terror before Russlan, who, magic ring in hand, restores Ludmilla to consciousness and himself to happiness.

"Russlan and Ludmilla" was produced in 1842. With the public the work proved, in comparison with the earlier triumph of "A Life for the Czar," a dismal failure. By some this has been attributed to the new-

ness and strangeness of the musical ideas it contained; but M. Pougin probably hits the nail on the head when, quoting from a St. Petersburg contemporary newspaper, he reminds us that at the last moment the part of Ratmir had to be relegated to an obscure contralto, who, curiously enough, was a namesake of Mme. Petrova, a favourite operatic singer originally chosen for this rôle. There must nevertheless have been a considerable curiosity on the part of the public, for "Russlan and Ludmilla" ran for thirty-two performances before it was taken off. It was given some twenty times in the two following seasons and did not disappear from the repertory until St. Petersburg was deprived of Russian opera, which migrated to Moscow, owing to the engagement of Rubini and a troupe of Italians, in 1844.\* Later on, after the death of Glinka, the work was destined to come into its own. It was revived at St. Petersburg, after a lapse of fifteen years, in 1859, and when again mounted in 1864 it remained in the bill of the Maryinsky Theatre, and was subsequently honoured in similar fashion to "A Life for the Czar" in 1892 with a jubilee celebration, which took place at its two hundred and eighty-fifth performance.

Glinka considered his second opera as considerably superior, in point of artistic maturity, to his first, and its failure to achieve a unanimous success bitterly disappointed him. The consequent depression of spirits

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\* Rubini had visited the capital in the previous year, and besides succeeding in making a profit of fifty-four thousand francs, received at the hands of Nicholas I the appointment of director of singing in Russia and the rank of colonel.

proved once more a menace to his health, and he had again to leave his native country in search of a complete change of scene. He went first to Paris, in 1845. He had already been made aware of the sentiments of esteem which had been fully expressed by contemporary composers, such as Meyerbeer, Liszt and Berlioz, and once in Paris he lost no time in presenting himself to the latter, who was at the time occupied in directing a series of orchestral and choral concerts. Berlioz, like Glinka, was nettled by the neglect of his native public, and the fellow-feeling on the Frenchman's part kindled an affection for Glinka, which was given expression in a most eulogistic essay in the Paris "*Journal des Débats*," of which he was then the musical correspondent. In return, Glinka took steps to secure for Berlioz's music a better appreciation in Russia, and these efforts came to fruition on Berlioz's appearance in St. Petersburg a twelve-month later. Glinka was deeply impressed by Berlioz's orchestral innovations. He determined to make further essays himself in symphonic form, and at the same time to effect a compromise in the matter of harmonic complexion, so that while satisfying his own artistic needs, his music would not be of a nature likely to prevent it from securing popular appreciation—a very worthy resolve.

Prior to leaving Russia, he had completed the incidental music to a tragedy called "*Prince Kolmsky*," the work of Kukolnik, a friend of the composer, who is described by a somewhat austere Russian literary historian as a poor playwright and a worse novelist. This music is generally considered as containing the best work of Glinka, and it won the very high esteem

of Tchaikovsky in spite of his regard of his compatriot more as a gentleman than an artist.\* But it was not until Glinka left France, for Spain, that he found material in the moulding of which he could execute the resolve prompted by his experience of French musicianship, and he had left Spain for Russia, ere he set to work upon this task.

He arrived in Spain in May, 1845, spent the summer at Valladolid and the winter at Madrid. He seems to have been much impressed by the excellence of the climate, which suited him particularly well, as did also the life he led, free as it was from every care. He was able materially to enrich his store of subject matter for those future compositions in which are to be found variations upon Spanish songs and dance themes. In his diary he notes that the Spaniards, like the Russians, are under the spell of Italian music and regrets that the use of the Spanish national idiom in art-music is, for that reason, far from frequent. There is little doubt that Glinka found that he possessed a natural sympathy with this Spanish popular music. He makes no attempt to account for it, but this has been done for him, and very plausibly, by Mr. M.-D. Calvocoressi, who, in an exhaustive monograph, points

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\* Tchaikovsky somewhat commits himself by quoting a certain passage occurring in Glinka's "Memoirs" which he did not consider to be quite "parliamentary" when writing to his patroness, Nadejda von Meck, and while confessing himself astonished that a person of such coarseness should be capable of the refinement inherent in the "Slavsia" (the patriotic chorus in "A Life for the Czar" which apotheosises Russia) he seems to ignore the fact that the inclusion of the stigmatised passage in a letter to a lady was a case of "pot calling kettle black"!

out that like the music of Russia, that of Spain derives some elements from the Orient. Mr. Calvo-coressi calls attention further to the anomolous circumstance that the exploitation of Spanish rhythms by modern native composers is derivable from the example of the Russian master.

After two years in Spain Glinka returned to Russia. He spent the following winter at his home and then proceeded to Warsaw, remaining there for three years. His chief output during his stay in Warsaw consisted of "Kamarinskaya," "Jota Aragonese" and "A Night in Madrid."

"Kamarinskaya" is an orchestral fantasia founded on a nuptial song and a traditional dance which he had heard in his native village, the simultaneous performance of which, be it noted, foreshadowed both the manner and the matter of his symphonic arrangement; therein, as will be remembered by those who have heard the work, the two themes are placed in juxtaposition with a superb mastery of means. The "Jota" and the "Night in Madrid" are given the generic titles of overture and in these he employed the materials accumulated during the Spanish sojourn.

This period was brought to a close by a renewal of the desire for travel. In 1852 he started in the direction of France. He called once more at Berlin, where he made the acquaintance of Meyerbeer, then went on to the south of France, not making any prolonged stay, and thence direct to Paris. In this year he made a beginning upon a symphonic poem on the subject of Gogol's "Tarass Boulba," one which must surely have had a sufficiently strong appeal; but it was not destined to be completed, the reason as given by the

composer being that he was unable to shake off an obsession by German musical cliché in the execution of his developments.

On the outbreak of hostilities in the Crimea in 1854 he returned to St. Petersburg, a step, it is said, which was largely due to patriotic feelings, and passed a quiet time in company with his sister. This period was destined to have an important influence upon the subsequent course of events in the history of modern Russian music, for amongst the circle of young musicians in which Glinka moved at this time, were Alexander Seroff, whose later critical work was particularly helpful in the development of the Russian school, Dargomijsky, who became the successor of Glinka in the domain of Russian national opera, and Balakireff, who, as was prophesied by Glinka himself, ultimately found his true mission in bearing the nationalistic standard, and, it should be added, in strengthening its staff. Whilst in St. Petersburg, Glinka began a further attempt at opera on a subject drawn from the work of Shakovsky, an eighteenth century poet, but relinquished the project on the birth of a desire to devote himself to church music. In order to study the western ecclesiastical idiom, he once more sought the guidance of Dehn, and for that purpose proceeded in 1856 to Berlin. This was his last journey. Early in January, 1857, Meyerbeer, availing himself of the presence of the Russian master in the German capital, arranged a special concert devoted to Glinka's works, and it was on leaving the hall, that Glinka contracted the chill which brought about his death on February 3. He was buried in Berlin, but three months

later his remains were conveyed to their present resting place in St. Petersburg, where a monument was erected to his memory in 1906.

/Glinka possessed the faculties of original production and assimilation, and these combined enabled him to invest the folk-song material employed by him with the dignity requisite for its embodiment in the form of art-music. As has already been pointed out, his success as a composer was not as complete as it might have been, had he conceived from the outset the intention to devote himself entirely to a musical career, and thus prepared himself by a thorough grounding on the theoretical side of his art. He was also much hampered by poorness of health, the legacy of his pampered childhood. His claim to immortality must rest upon his having unified the experience and the aims of earlier and lesser composers in the accomplishment of his single purpose, that of placing Russian musical nationality upon a firm basis.

#### IV.

##### DARGOMIJSKY.

IT will be remembered that among the artistic circle in which Glinka found himself during the last years of his life, spent in St. Petersburg, was Dargomijsky, who, as has been said, became his apostolic successor in the domain of Russian national opera. Certain differences in the aims and achievements of these two masters will be referred to in due course.

Alexander Serguiévitch Dargomijsky was born on the country estate of his parents, situated in the government of Toula, on February 2, 1813. The ancestral home was at Smolensk, but this had been vacated owing to the Napoleonic invasion, a year prior to the birth of our subject. Like Glinka's, his parents were in comfortable circumstances. The child was extraordinarily backward, and did not begin to speak until five years of age. When he was six he received, in St. Petersburg, his first musical instruction, some piano lessons, but it is recorded by Fétis that the pupil paid scant attention to the actual mechanism of piano-playing, the lesson hour being usually spent in



prolonged discussions arising out of an early penchant for the composition of sonatinas and little movements of different kinds. Two years later he began to learn the violin, and soon reached a proficiency enabling him to take part, as second violin, in the performance of string quartets. From this time dates his realisation of the higher import of the musical art. At fifteen he was composing duets for piano and violin and a few string quartets. A little later his parents who were sufficiently enlightened to appreciate the importance of cultivating the artistic side of their son's nature, placed him with Schoberlechner, a well-known teacher and composer, whose wife had a highly-paid engagement as singer at the Italian Opera in St. Petersburg. Schoberlechner was able to impart to the lad the rudiments of harmony and counterpoint. The master retired with his wife to a villa in Florence in 1831, and this interruption of the youth's lessons was in all probability the cause of his candidature for a government appointment which he received in this year. His official occupation was not allowed, however, unduly to interfere with his favourite pursuit. He perfected himself in piano-playing, became an exceptionally brilliant sight-reader, and, mixing as he did in a musical set, found himself very much in demand in society drawing-rooms, particularly in the capacity of accompanist to singers of repute. In this manner he became thoroughly conversant with the vocal idiom, occupying himself therewith to an extent indeed which rendered impossible a sufficient research in the direction of instrumental technique. It was now that he wrote a quantity of songs, romances, cantatas and part-songs, with

accompaniment for piano or quartet. At this time he was little more than an accomplished amateur, attracted to music by the pleasure to be derived from its performance, and had not yet conceived any views in respect of its propagation as an art. The significant meeting with Glinka, however, resulted, as may be easily imagined, in a distinct widening of Dargomijsky's artistic horizon, and it was from Glinka that he first derived the notion of improving his technical resources as a writer, with a view of becoming an operatic composer. To this end the State appointment was relinquished, and he set himself anew to study the subjects of harmony and counterpoint, for which purpose Glinka lent him the note-books used by him in his studies with Dehn, the Berlin teacher, and also to a careful perusal of the orchestral scores of classic works.

When he felt that his resources had been sufficiently improved, he began to look out for a suitable subject for an opera. His choice first fell upon Victor Hugo's "Lucrezia Borgia," but this does not seem to have pleased him, for hardly had he made a start upon the score than he relinquished the task and transferred his labours to the setting of another work by the great French poet. Hugo had already drawn from his novel, "Notre Dame de Paris," a libretto which had been employed for operatic purposes by the daughter of Bertin,\* a patron of Berlioz. On it he had bestowed the title of "Esmeralda," the name of the gipsy queen who is the heroine of the novel. This

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\* Bertin had a controlling interest in the "Journal des Débats," of which Berlioz was musical critic.

version was performed in 1836 at the Paris Opera, but in spite of the care with which it was mounted and cast, it was doomed, as an undeniably poor production, to failure. It was in the same year that Dargomijsky resolved to make use of this text, and having first written his music to the existing French words, and having then had them translated into Russian, he was able, in 1839, to present the completed work to the directors of the Imperial Opera. In matters such as this, as many artists of genius have discovered to their cost, the official mind works slowly, and Dargomijsky was destined to experience the pangs of disappointment, which are the fate, in varying degree, of most worthy candidates for artistic recognition. In spite of every attempt to extort something like a decision from the operatic authorities who employed a variety of pretexts in attempted justification of the delay, it was not until eight years had elapsed that, in 1847, he learned of the official acceptance of his opera, which was finally produced early in the December of that year.

As might be expected, this long interval was instrumental in retarding the composer's development; he could not but feel that it would be unprofitable to make a further essay of the kind before receiving some sort of public verdict upon the completed work.

"Esmeralda" was produced in Moscow, and was pronounced a success, a judgment endorsed four years later by its recognition at the hands of the St. Petersburg directorate. As evidence of the popular esteem it enjoyed at this time, it may be noted that the question of its production at the Italian Opera was raised by the famous Tamburini, who wished to be heard

in it, but the authorities controlling the Imperial Opera availed themselves of an old by-law prohibiting the translation of operas by Russian composers into Italian.

At the epoch at which "Esmeralda" was written, Dargomijsky was to a great extent under the influence of Meyerbeer, whose "Robert le Diable" had captured Paris in 1831, and of Halévy; and it is therefore no surprise to find that the style in which his first operatic venture was written is closely akin to that of the composers mentioned and that there is nothing positively original in its music. There is a feature, however, worthy of notice. The remarkable mastery, which Dargomijsky subsequently attained in the domain of the vocal, is here foreshadowed; the question of setting the text in such wise as to facilitate declamation, a study to which later Russian operatic composers were to devote no little attention, had already been addressed in "Esmeralda."

In 1848 Dargomijsky determined again to seek the protection of the operatic directorate and he presented a work originally designed as a cantata, now rearranged as an "opera ballet." This, entitled "The Triumph of Bacchus" was inspired by Pushkin's dramatic poem. The composer was not this time kept long in doubt as to the intentions of the powers. He received an instant and decisive refusal of his work. The rebuff does not appear to have caused so great a disappointment as to plunge its victim into despair, but for some little while he withdrew his attention from the dramatic sphere of his art, and occupied himself in the composition of a number of songs, "romances" and duets which contributed at that time

far more to the spreading of his reputation, we are assured, than did the production of "Esmeralda"

Dargomijsky's neglect of the opera as medium did not last very long, and in his next venture he again turned to Pushkin for his literary material. The subject which he now chose was that of "Russalka," a favourite legend in Russia, relating to a water sprite whose behaviour resembles that of a siren. The national poet's adaptation of this legend is a poem in dialogue which is constructed in such fashion as to render it peculiarly fitting for dramatic treatment; consequently its arrangement for theatrical purposes imposed but a slight task upon Dargomijsky, who was able to employ, unaltered, a large amount of Pushkin's material. To the setting of this were added the choruses and dances indispensable in securing the necessary spectacular effect. Much stress has been laid upon Dargomijsky's advantage in being able to work upon the actual poetic material, as against the considerable disadvantage at which most composers are placed in having to rely upon the work of a librettist, who, with the best intentions is often nevertheless baffled in his work by the conflicting claims on the one hand of the original, and on the other of his reproduction and the purpose for which it is destined. Dargomijsky profited to the full by this advantage and as a result the score of "Russalka" was of a quality which did not fail to earn for him in contemporary opinion, the distinction of being considered the worthy successor of Glinka in the region of opera.

As to the style and general design of the work, opinion is, however, divided, for whereas one writer, a

Frenchman, compliments Dargomijsky on his fidelity to the practice of including the traditional solos and concerted vocal numbers at that time inseparable from Franco-Italian opera, M. Cui, who at the time of writing, was evidently already intent on inaugurating his propaganda in active repudiation of the claims of the operatic "star," blames the composer for the inclusion of "arias, duets, trios and concerted items," which he characterises as a demonstration of Dargomijsky's inferiority. M. Cui allows that the composer has reached great heights in dramatic effect, but makes a categorical division of the quality of the work. Whilst deprecating the inclusion of detached numbers, he is immensely impressed by the amount of artistic truth in the recitativo sections of "Russalka" which is in this particular, he says, entirely free from worn-out commonplaces and annoying conventionalities. He further compliments the composer upon his success in giving to the music a complexion which is invariably in keeping with the text, so that every dramatic detail appears to have sprung, together with its musical accompaniment, from a single mind.

In view of these opinions, it is interesting to note that the comparative coolness with which this opera was received on its production in 1856 at the now reconstructed and rechristened Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, was ascribed to its departure from the approved Italian mode which had still a considerable following.

The half-hearted reception of "Russalka" once more drove its composer from the rocky path of opera, and for four years he again devoted himself to the creation of songs in which region his work is as varied

as it is copious. Dargomijsky's songs and "romances" are illustrative of the whole range of emotion, but some of the best specimens are in a vein of humour or of satire. His Eastern examples prove him to be the possessor of that unfailing instinct for the artistic portrayal of the Orient which not only characterises the work of the Slav, but is so frequent an agent in the choice of a medium.

In 1864 Dargomijsky left Russia with the intention of acquainting Western Europe with his music. He failed entirely to gain a hearing either in France or Germany, but the Belgians, who have since shown a considerable regard for Russian music, gave him a particularly warm welcome. The works chosen by him for this pilgrimage were excerpts from "Rus-salka" and three orchestral pieces, "Kazachok," "Russian Legend" and "Dance of the Mummers."

## V.

### "THE STONE GUEST" AND "THE FIVE."

BEFORE proceeding to a detailed discussion of Dargomysky's last and in many respects most important opera it is necessary somewhat to anticipate the actual course of events in Russian musical history, and to refer to the little band of five musicians who came to regard "The Stone Guest" as a model which embodied the cardinal principles of operatic construction. This group of nationalists and idealists owed its formation, in the first place, to the meeting in 1857 between Balakireff, its "father," and Cui, its "prophet." Soon after making the acquaintance of Glinka, Balakireff found in Cui, a youth of about the same age, a congenial companion with whom he could profitably discuss the projects which he had founded upon the ideas engendered by Glinka's music. A little later Moussorgsky presented himself to Balakireff, with whom he wished to take lessons, and speedily became a member of the circle. In 1856 he had become acquainted with Borodin, but saw little of him until 1862, when Borodin was introduced by him to Balakireff. Rimsky-Korsakoff, the youngest of the five, met



Balakireff in the year previous. He at once became a disciple, but was prevented by absence from a close intercourse and an active co-operation with the others until some three years later. These five men had widely differing temperaments, but were united by their common recognition of the ideals of nationalism and sincerity in music. They wished to form a national style as a medium for the expression in music of national characteristics, to preserve in their music, even when associated with drama, its intrinsic value as absolute music, and to make vocal music a source from which a clear psychologic exposition of the text should flow.

Of great importance also were the canons laid down with regard to the structure and substance of opera. The scenic arrangements were to be entirely dependent upon the relations between the characters and upon the course of the drama as narrative. There was to be a wholesale repudiation of the inanities of Italian opera and an attempt to continue the work of Glinka and Dargomijsky in freeing Russian music from Italianisation, a parasite at that time threatening it with ultimate extinction, slowly but none the less surely. The music of opera must be composed primarily with the object of illustrating the text and of revealing its essential and vital significance. The subject of the drama must be worthy and its treatment dignified. The vocal artists must not only be trained to a high pitch of technical efficiency, but must be imbued with a respect for the work and must be capable of a self-effacement, when such was demanded by the interests of the work, hitherto undreamed of. The scenery must always be in thorough accord with the

drama and arranged in a fashion befitting the exigencies of the piece. The departments of stage pageantry and ballet must be cultivated, but the composer must never allow himself to introduce these features unless their presence entirely justified the dramatic situation.

Such were the ideals of the "Five."

They may be epitomised as a passionate desire for a nationalistic art, which, by embodying the qualities of purity, legitimacy and sincerity, should render itself safe from any and every contamination.

At first blush these principles might easily be supposed to have sprung from a Wagnerian origin. At this time, however, Wagner's music was little known in Russia, and the nationalist composers, moreover, did not by any means see eye to eye with the German reformer; they wished particularly to avoid the attachment of a predominant importance to the orchestra, and they were desirous of defining and adopting a compromise between what was the earlier Wagnerian conception—a purely lyrical opera—and what Wagner actually achieved in his "Ring"—virtually a symphonic opera. We have from M. Cui, the historian of the group, a quite definite statement with regard to the views of his circle upon Wagner's operatic music. "I would like," he says, "to preserve my compatriots from the dangerous contagion of Wagner's decadence; . . . whoever admires his operas holds Glinka as a writer of vaudevilles!" This is obviously dictated by a temperamental aversion from the Wagnerian musical style, but elsewhere M. Cui actually avows that in his opinion the reforms operating in the works of Glinka and Dargomijsky and in those of

his friends, have but a few points of contact with those of the "German innovator."

On his return from the Western tour, Dargomijsky came closely into touch with this group of five musicians, whom he found already agreed upon the general merits of "Russalka" and with the excellence of its "melodic recitative" in particular. Once Dargomijsky had been made acquainted in detail with their combined aspirations, he allied himself to them with enthusiasm, and determined forthwith to write an opera, which, in every respect, should exemplify the principles of the new Russian school. For this work he chose as literary basis the incident of the statue in "Don Juan," and employed the version offered ready to hand by Pushkin's poem, "The Stone Guest." "With a hardihood," says M. Calvocoressi, "unparalleled at that time in the annals of musical history and which is only to be compared with that of Debussy when planning his 'Pelléas et Mélisande,' Dargomijsky chose in place of the conventional libretto—written with the special purpose of its musical realisation in view—the actual text of Pushkin himself."\*

In this work Dargomijsky developed his idea of legitimacy in the relation of song to speech to its limit, and he reveals therein his preoccupation with the task of making the music at all points the handmaid of the text, the sense of the libretto being invariably accorded the preference. "It is my wish," he wrote, "that the music should interpret the words. I have not the slightest intention of reducing music to a mere pastime

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\* Pushkin's version differs considerably from that of Da Ponte, used by Mozart.

for the benefit of the dilettanti. For me the truth is indispensable." He succeeded to the full in realising this artistic project, but it must be understood that "The Stone Guest" stands in relation to the art of which it became "the gospel," rather as that of a pedagogue's textbook to the creation of genius, than as a complete and inspired work. But of its acceptance by the group, to whom it became known as "the Gospel," there is no shadow of a doubt, for in the words of M. Cui: "The last work of Dargomijsky constitutes for us the key-stone of the new Russian operatic school."

The work was not destined, however, to be finished by the hand which began it. Dargomijsky succumbed to the effects of an aneurism in January, 1869, having entrusted its completion, on his deathbed, to M. Cui, who occupied himself with an unfinished scene, and to Rimsky-Korsakoff, who faithfully followed the instructions given him as to orchestration.

It was not publicly performed until February, 1872. A difficulty arose owing to the price placed upon his work by the composer exceeding that fixed by an old Russian law, £160 for an opera by a native composer. The amount, £330, was ultimately raised by public subscription.

With the public the work had a poor reception, and many of the critics expressed opinions, which time has confirmed, with respect to its want of inspiration and the dryness of the "melodic recitative" consequent upon Dargomijsky's determined fidelity to his ideal. Wilhelm von Lenz, a contemporary writer, speaks of "The Stone Guest" as a "recitative in three acts," and M. Pougin, in 1897, allowed himself to express, in tones almost reaching the pitch of indignation, his astonish-

ment that a composer should become the victim of such an obsession—the critic ignoring any likelihood of Dargomijsky's ideal being ever realised with success\*.

What was in truth the missing factor—one indispensable to the success of such a work as "The Stone Guest"—was the possession of an unending flow of melodic inspiration, such as was the gift of his predecessor, Glinka. Whereas Glinka's musical creations were "spontaneously lyrical," Dargomijsky actually emphasised his limitations by adherence to the fixed idea of "melodic recitative." He was, of course, already hampered by a strictly limited musical education, and did not cultivate, like Glinka, a potential eclecticism by travelling; with the exception of his one journey to Western Europe, he spent his whole life in St. Petersburg.

His reputation as an operatic master rests upon "Russalka," composed while yet a more or less close follower of Glinka's style, and as a musician with a purpose (to which he had not yet sacrificed himself), upon his songs which may be regarded as an artistic consummation of his ideal. He is further to be credited with the introduction of the element of humour into Russian opera and of satire into Russian music. Gogol, the author of "The Inspector-General," is described by a literary historian as having "snatched the branding-irons of satire from the trembling hands of Kantemir, Von Visine, Kryloff and Griboïedoff . . . .," but Dargomijsky may be said to have in-

\* Debussy's "*Pelléas et Mélisande*" (published in 1902) is virtually a recitative in five acts.

vented the procedure of employing art-music as a means of caricaturing the foibles of his generation.

The symphonic works, not already mentioned, which hold an important place in the history of Russian orchestral development, are "Baba-Yaga," a descriptive fantasia based upon a well-known Russian legend, and a "Finnish Fantasia."

of the nationalistic school, and, in that capacity, a redoubtable opponent of Seroff. Seroff gave early manifestations of the possession of an exceptional intelligence and of a variety of talents. His tastes led him to the study of languages, of natural history, the plastic arts, the drama, and, above all, of music, to which his affections accorded a marked preference.

He had some piano lessons from an elderly relative, a lady, and soon after entering the School of Jurisprudence in 1834 he began studying the 'cello with Carl Schuberth, the newly-appointed 'cellist to the Czar Nicholas I. These lessons, which did not last long, together with those received in youth, constitute practically the whole of his assisted study, and for the rest he was entirely self-taught. When, in 1840, he left the School of Jurisprudence, he was forced against his inclinations, which were denied in deference to the parental wish, to accept a government clerkship. But his whole being was in revolt against the nature of the work, and not only did he spend every spare moment in studying musical literature of all kinds, but allowed his official work to be interfered with by the consideration of an extensive plan for the improvement of musical biography, which he considered crude and unphilosophical in its treatment by past writers. He received a very severe blow, however, in his transference to a post in the Crimea, whither he was sent in 1848 as vice-president of the Tribunal. The stagnant life of a small provincial town, Simferopol, proved a forbidding obstacle to artistic development, and the step taken at this time by the exile as a means of advancement, that of securing a course of theoretical instruction by corres-

pondence\* did not turn out at all successfully. To his official occupation he remained thoroughly indifferent, and vouchsafed it the minimum attention. Finally, after repeated vain appeals to his father, he decided to respond to the call of music, and to the despair of his undiscerning parent, he embarked upon a musical career.

His natural literary bent led him into the field of criticism, which at that time was more or less an arid waste of biassed and ill-considered expressions of opinion. His first articles, which created a strong impression, were published in a literary review. They were devoted to an attack upon Oulibicheff,† a musical *littérateur* of some distinction, who idolised Mozart and depreciated Beethoven, especially in regard to the latter's last phase. Seroff subsequently became contributor to a number of periodicals, including the "Contemporary," the (French) "Journal of St. Petersburg" and the "Dramatic and Musical Review." He became also an industrious lecturer. During the winter of 1858-9 he gave a series of lectures on the historical and æsthetic aspects of musical theory at the University; later, in 1864, he devoted a series to music-drama, which were repeated at the invitation of the Moscow Conservatoire in 1865; and in 1870, six lectures on the development of opera were given before the St. Petersburg Arts Club.

Unfortunately, his intellectual qualities were seri-

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\* From Hunke, a theorist of repute, domiciled in St. Petersburg.

† Author of "A New Biography of Mozart," from which Otto Jahn derived a considerable amount of material.



ously discounted by a polemical acerbity which detracted from the intrinsic value of his critical pronouncements. Gustave Bertrand,\* while on a visit to St. Petersburg in 1874, wrote an article for a French paper, after a study of Seroff's writings, in which he arrives at what may be presumed to be a just estimate of the Russian's critical failings. He sums up Seroff as a sort of "superior person" not by any means wanting in recognition of his own undoubted merits and quite intolerant in regard to the judgment of contemporaries whom he considered less fitted. There can have been no Russian musical writer, says Bertrand, with whom Seroff did not engage in combat, and he did not scruple when hard pressed to resort to scurrilous invective and abuse. The French writer further commits himself to the view that Seroff's method of demolishing an opposing theory before bringing forward his own, was not by any means devoid of disingenuousness, and places him in the same category as Weber and Wagner, both of whom were alive to the advantage of such procedure.

Seroff's disdain does not appear to have been confined to the opinions of his compatriots; no European musical authority whose precepts or works happened to be in conflict with the argument propounded at a given moment, was spared it.

But the most astonishing feature of Seroff's collective critical work is his amazing and unashamed self-contradiction. An example, cited by M. Pougin, should suffice. In 1856 Seroff indulged in an uncompromising freedom of language in differing with Liszt

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\* A French critic, distinguished as musical archæologist.

and other supporters of Wagner, as to the merit of that composer's output. He characterised Wagner as a dilettante who had never completed his studies; the melodic element in his works was of the feeblest; the harmonisation was excessively wearisome and the orchestration a jejune and pretentious attempt to imitate Meyerbeer and Berlioz. In the very same journal two years later he said that no one but a complete idiot could fail to appreciate the abundant glow of life, poetry and beauty in Wagner's lyric works, and in a final descent to the depths of obloquy, he exhorted "all anti-Wagnerian cretins to cease venting their impotent anger upon those immortal works."

Seroff's mental palate must certainly have been insensible to these early opinions, which he digested so easily and so soon. Apart, however, from these over-facile changes of view, it should be noted that Seroff's polemical dissertations upon operatic structure have rendered brilliant service in enabling students of that art-form to arrive at a clear perception of real values.

The later view, so violently expressed, as to the superlative merit of Wagner's works, was the outcome of a visit to Wagner in 1858. It should be observed that whatever the indifference with which Seroff must have regarded, or at least appeared to regard, his own change of opinion, the modification was, at any rate, in a right direction. The tardy expiation of the ordinary critical misjudgment has little but its urbanity to recommend it!

Seroff had, during his visit, imbibed sufficient of the strong drink of Wagnerism to become intoxicated,

and on his return from Lucerne he began to take up the cudgels on behalf of the Wagnerian doctrines relating to music-drama. This was accompanied by a passionate repudiation of the tenets of the nationalistic group who, as will be remembered, were in favour of the treatment of the operatic orchestra as a dignified accessory rather than an autocratic principal, and at the same time he inaugurated a single-handed campaign against Anton Rubinstein, whose musical influence in Russia he believed to be pernicious. At a time when Wagner was little known, when the nationalistic school was beginning to make itself felt and when Rubinstein was enjoying a positive adulation at the hands of all classes of Russian society, Seroff's attitude in these matters was attributed, naturally enough, to a deplorable wrong-headedness, a verdict which a recollection of his previous critical behaviour did everything to support. Seroff's reputation as musical *littérateur* began consequently to wane, and it was a distinctly fortunate circumstance for him that about this epoch in his stormy career he felt attracted towards the creative side of his art, a tendency which had its origin in the Wagnerian domination.

During the winter of 1860 he witnessed a performance by the celebrated Ristori of Giacometti's "Judith," and his admiration for the work, his belief in its suitability as a subject and his strong desire for creative activity, were responsible for his resolve to adopt it as the basis of an opera.

As a whole-hearted Wagnerian, he naturally undertook to provide his own libretto. He was wise enough however, to seek aid both in the planning of the dramatic construction of the work and in the revision of

his verses,\* which he entrusted to the poet, Maikoff,† whom he had doubtless met in the Department of Censure of Foreign Newspapers.‡ With little experience as composer at his command, Seroff must have been faced with many an obstacle, but after two years of unremitting labour, he was able to bring forward the completed opera in 1862. It was first performed in 1863 at St. Petersburg, under the most favourable auspices, every possible attention being paid to casting and rehearsal.

"Judith" was a tremendous success, not only with the public, but with the critics. That a man who, until the age of forty-three, had shown no particular aptitude for composition, should suddenly bring forth an opera which might well have figured as the crowning work of a creative career was naturally regarded as a phenomenon.

Tchaikovsky, writing of "Judith" to his patroness, von Meck, in 1872, held forth at great length upon the subject of Seroff's character and work, and he makes it quite clear that there was nothing half-hearted either in the public, the critical, or his own private esteem of the opera. M. Cui, who had no reason to

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\* M. Pougin seems to regard the fact that Seroff placed Maikoff's amendments in brackets as a remarkable lapse into fairness!

† The author of "The Princess" was particularly well suited for the work, having passed some years in Italy and being thus familiar with the tongue in which the original was written.

‡ Seroff had secured this fairly lucrative and not too absorbing appointment.

be pleased with so strong and determined an opponent of the nationalistic school, is able to congratulate Seroff on his adoption of what the former considers a reasonable compromise in the matter of the relation of the orchestra to the dramatic and vocal interest. M. Cui, shuddering at the very thought of a Russian committing a total sacrifice of vocal independence, notes with satisfaction that Seroff could not bring himself to subscribe to such a procedure. Generally speaking, the reasoned approbation of "Judith" can be summarised by reference to the encomiastic utterances of Tchaikovsky, who says that the opera is written with unusual warmth and sometimes rises to great emotional heights, and to the occasional depreciations of M. Pougin, who, while acknowledging the beauty of some concerted numbers and of the spectacular music, finds fault with the recitative, which he describes as at times heavy and monotonous.

The successful production of "Judith," besides causing an extraordinary accession to its composer's already abundant store of self-esteem, was instrumental in exciting his desire to make a further essay of the kind.

To someone who was hardy enough to remonstrate with him for not choosing a national subject for his first opera, Seroff excused himself on the ground of not wishing to be branded an imitator of Glinka, and on being further taxed by this very bold interlocutor with having nevertheless imitated Wagner, he explained that, while adherence to the example of Glinka would have been quoted to his disadvantage, his Wagnerian model was not familiar to the Russian public, and that "Judith" might be regarded as paving the

way to an ultimate understanding of the great German's works.

For his second opera, "Rogneda," he chose a national subject which he derived from a remote historical period. It is related to the adoption in Russia of Christianity, which occurred in the tenth century. Seroff's choice of material is said to have been influenced by the opportunity thus offered of contrasting the pagan with the Christian element, and it is upon this contraposition that the musical interest of the work is based. He again elected to undertake the text, and seems this time to have worked unaided.

The score of "Rogneda" is remarkable for its composer's secession from Wagnerian influences—a retrogression to the style of Halévy is notable therein. In the opinion of M. Bertrand the projection of the contrasted dramatic atmosphere is somewhat too marked; Seroff seems to have been a little over-anxious in the matter of emphasising the contrasted elements and, in his employment of national and religious material, appears to have created an effect of patchwork which was far from his intention. Tchaikovsky considered that "Rogneda" was of a much lower order of achievement than "Judith," and does not, in the manner of expressing this opinion, give one any reason to suppose that his dislike of Seroff influenced him in forming it. "Rogneda" was performed for the first time in 1865, two years and a half after "Judith," at the same theatre. It was immensely successful, and created a sensation surpassing even that following the production of the earlier work. Some idea as to the extent of the attention it attracted can be gathered from the circumstance that the Emperor granted its

composer a much-needed pension of twelve hundred roubles (about £120) annually.

It is more than likely that the immediate success and the principal defect of this opera are closely related. As M Bertrand points out, the work suffers somewhat from an undue stress upon its contrasted material, which reveals to the discerning critic that calculation was a greater factor in its composition than inspiration. Seroff's experience as a critic enabled him to know exactly what was likely to please the public, and his vanity must have been such as to dictate its propitiation.

This success and the financial relief which came in its train, enabled Seroff to rest a little upon his laurels. Turning his attention once more to the literary side, he showed plainly that his attainment of a general popularity as a composer gave him such confidence in himself as to encourage him to believe that a modification of his antagonism towards his nationalistic compatriots might now be adopted without loss of dignity. In his lectures on Glinka and Dargomijsky, given before the Russian Musical Society in 1866, his tone was more or less conciliatory.

For the text of his last opera he chose Ostrovsky's comedy, "The Power of Evil." This work is symbolical of Seroff's last period. In it he determined to embody the application of Wagnerian principles to a nationalistic substance. For this purpose he decided to introduce the folk-song element. But while possessing an exceptionally far-reaching knowledge of the subject of folk-song, his musical organism was not permeated by its spirit as was that of Glinka, and as is that, for instance, of Sibelius. "The Power of

Evil" served plainly to reveal a conspicuous feebleness of inspiration. The subject itself, like most of the output of the author of "The Storm," was of a decidedly gloomy nature and was not considered particularly suitable for musical treatment. Seroff had not completed the work when, in 1871, he died. The task of orchestration devolved upon his pupil, Solovieff, now an esteemed critic and composer. On its production it failed to make an appeal to the public, and time has sanctioned this indifference.

The failure of "The Power of Evil" would doubtless have astonished Seroff, for he was sufficiently confident of its favourable reception to begin a fourth opera based on the "Christmas Eve Revels" of Gogol, the Russian Dickens. Some of the material has since been worked up by his wife, a consummate musician, into an orchestral suite, published in 1877.

Seroff wrote several works outside the region of the theatre: a "Stabat Mater," an "Ave Maria," incidental music to "Nero," a "Christmas Song," a "Hopak" and a "Zaparogue Dance" for orchestra, and it is believed that prior to beginning "Judith" he had composed fragments of a work which proved abortive.

There is no great difficulty in correctly placing Seroff in the history of Russian opera. His first two dramatic works are held to possess no mean intrinsic value, and to excel in the domain of the choral, orchestral and spectacular. The reason for their lack of spontaneity seems fairly clear, namely, that Seroff was impelled to enter the operatic arena, not by a need for musical self-expression, but by a desire to provide example as a fulfilment of his own theorising. The supreme importance of his works lies therefore in their



value as illustrations of the various methods and conflicting theories to be noted in a survey of the development of the Russian operatic school.

Alexis Feodorovich Lvoff, the composer of the Russian national anthem, was born at Reval in Esthonia, on June 6, 1799. He was the son of Feodore Lvoff, who succeeded Bortniansky as director of the Imperial Court Chapel and anent whom there is a surprising dearth of biographical material. Musical by tendency and advantageously placed as to environment, Alexis Feodorovich rapidly attained proficiency on the violin, an accomplishment in which he was destined to excel, and acquired a good general musicianship under the guidance of his father. The circumstance that in Russia it was for a long time the custom to regard music not as a means of a livelihood, but as a serious occupation for the leisure hour, will be touched upon later; it is sufficient for the moment to note that young Lvoff entered the army, and enjoying rapid promotion, was appointed adjutant to Nicholas I, ultimately attaining the rank of General. His musical studies were not, however, neglected; every spare moment was devoted to the artistic object of his predilections.

It was during the period of his adjutancy that the circumstance arose which led to his composition of the national anthem. Prior to this, the Russians had made use of either the German hymn or our own. If there be ground for the proverbial assumption that song-making is a function of greater importance to a people than that of legislation, then Lvoff is undoubtedly worthy of his fame and popularity, which rest largely upon this achievement. He has given full

particulars regarding the creation of this hymn in his memoirs :

"In 1833 I accompanied the Emperor Nicholas on his journeys to Prussia and Austria. On returning to Russia, I was informed by Count Benkendorf that the sovereign had expressed a regret that we Russians possessed no national hymn ; being, moreover, tired of the English tune which had been used as a stop-gap for a very long time, he commissioned me to make an attempt to write a Russian anthem

"This momentous duty seemed likely to prove difficult of accomplishment. In recalling the British anthem, 'God Save the King,' which is so imposing, the French song, so full of originality, and the Austrian hymn, of which the music is so touching, I felt and fully appreciated the necessity of accomplishing something which would be robust, stately, stirring, national in character, something worthy to reverberate either in a church, through the soldiers' ranks, or amongst a crowd of people, something which would appeal alike to the lettered and the ignorant. This consideration absorbed me, and I was perplexed by the problem of fulfilling all these needs

"One night, on returning to my quarters at a very late hour, I composed and wrote out the tune of the hymn on the spur of the moment. Next day I went to Joukovsky\* and asked him to suggest some words ; but he was by no means musical and had a lot of trouble in adapting them to the minor close of the first cadence. Subsequently I was able to inform Count

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\* It will be remembered that Joukovsky suggested to Glinka the subject of "A Life for the Czar."

Benkendorff that the hymn was ready. The Emperor expressed a desire to hear it, and came on November 23, 1833, to the Court Chapel, accompanied by the Empress and the Grand-Duke Michael. I had assembled the whole choir and it was supported by two orchestras.

"The sovereign ordered the hymn to be played over several times, and asked to hear it sung without accompaniment, then he had it played by each orchestra in turn and finally with the united body of performers. His Majesty then said to me in French. 'It is really superb,' and there and then he commanded Count Benkendorff to inform the Minister of War that the hymn was adopted for the army. This measure was officially ratified on December 4, 1833. The first public performance took place on December 11, at the Grand Theatre, Moscow. The Emperor was apparently desirous of submitting my work for the approval of the Moscow public. On December 25, the hymn resounded through the halls of the Winter Palace on the occasion of the blessing of the colours.

"The sovereign graciously presented to me a gold snuff-box adorned with diamonds, as a mark of the imperial pleasure, and also ordered that the words 'God protect the Czar'\* should be added to the armorial bearings of the Lvoff family."

Twenty years or so later the anthem was ceremoniously performed in a fashion which can only be regarded as a deliberate labouring of the obvious. The following account was given by the "Gazette Musicale" on August 24, 1856: "Lvoff's popular Russian

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\* The first line of the anthem's text.

anthem will be sung in three different ways on the occasion of the Emperor's coronation during the display of a firework set-piece which will represent in chronological order the portraits of the Czars Peter the Great, Nicholas and Alexander II. The first time the hymn will be rendered by a chorus of a thousand voices; the second time by the whole chorus and the military bands, and the third to the accompaniment of cannons which will be discharged by electricity."

Other notable recognitions of the tune's merits are that of Gounod, who wrote upon it a fantasia for piano and orchestra, and Tchaikovsky's employment of it in his popular "1812" overture, in which the theme is heard, battling, as it were, with the "Marseillaise."

But for this achievement Lvoff's name as a composer would be a good deal less known than it is. He must, however, have been a particularly good violinist, and was highly esteemed in Russia and also in Germany as a quartet-leader. His own string quartet was for some time a feature in the musical life of St Petersburg. In 1840 he visited Leipzig and Paris as violinist and composer. His compositions include various dramatic works: "The Village Bailiff," in three acts, which was produced in St Petersburg, "Bianca and Gualtiero," composed in 1845 and performed at St. Petersburg and Dresden, "Undine," a fairy opera (1846), produced in Vienna, "Starosta Boris" (1854) and "The Embroideress," in one act. None of them was particularly successful. He also wrote a "Stabat Mater," six psalms, twenty-eight separate chants for use in the royal chapel, a concerto for violin, "The Duel" a fantasia for violin

and 'cello, twenty-four caprices, three fantasias for violin, orchestra and chorus, one of which was based on Russian soldiers' songs, and a number of vocal and instrumental works of minor importance. He published, in eleven volumes, an enormous collection of ancient chants derived from the ritual of the Greco-Russian Church, arranged in four-part harmonies.

Berlioz's estimate of Lvoff as "a composer of rare talent" is obviously of little value, and it seems probable that the Frenchman was favourably disposed towards one who held the appointment of manager of the Imperial Opera and had invited him to Russia to give concerts.

Wagner speaks with satisfaction of a performance of "Rienzi," in 1844, at Dresden, at which "these learned judges and magnates of the musical world," Spontini, Meyerbeer and Lvoff, were together present in a stage-box, but it is not difficult to perceive the disdain which lies between the words of this pompous description and which, later, in 1863, was no longer dissembled; Wagner mentions the conclusion of a contract with Lvoff, as manager of the Moscow Theatre, and describes him as being "a very insignificant person . . . in spite of the orders hanging from his neck."

✓ The national anthem itself cannot be regarded as a particularly happy inspiration, for beyond its temporary lapse into the minor, it has no affinity either with Russian popular song or with the national character.

In 1867 Lvoff's hearing began to fail, and he retired from military service and went to live on his estate at Kovno. There he died in December, 1870.

PART II  
THE NATIONALISTS



# I

## BALAKIREFF

SOME attention has already been given, when dealing with Dargomyzsky, to the band of five idealists who sought to interpret the nationalistic message of Glinka. The composer of "A Life for the Czar" had lacked one of the most important qualities of the reformer, that of determination. In this connection it has justly been said of him by his French biographer, M. Octave Fouque, that it was not until his decease that he became an innovator and a pioneer and that such reforms as were initiated by him were unconscious and not deliberate. But there need be little fear of laying too much stress upon the influence exerted by Glinka, whatever its nature, upon the group of nationalists. His first opera with its historical subject may be regarded as containing the germ of nationalism from which have sprung Moussorgsky's "Boris Godounoff" and his "Khovantchina," Borodin's "Prince Igor" and Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Pskovitianka" ("Ivan the Terrible"), whilst the orientalism of "Russlan and Ludmilla" has with



every justification been credited with the origin of all that eastern flavour which characterises so many of the works of the "five" and their disciples.

It is interesting to note that none of these men who undertook the active propagation of Glinka's gospel lived entirely by the practice of music as a profession. Balakireff had sufficient fortune to enable him to devote himself to his art without financial anxiety; Borodin had, in his primary profession of science, an ample means of support; Cui was a military officer of distinction; Rimsky-Korsakoff did not resign his commission in the navy until two years after his appointment as director of the Free School of Music, and it must be placed to the credit of Moussorgsky that, although he frequently experienced the pinch of poverty, it never occurred to him to compromise with the public by resorting to the "pot-boiler." Instead, he sought an administrative appointment which enabled him to maintain the level of his artistic ideal.

Owing to a curious blindness to the benefit of such a circumstance or perhaps to the prejudice naturally felt by more conservative musicians against the innovations of the "five," accusations of amateurishness have been urged against them. The difference in this matter between the attitudes of Liszt and Tchaikovsky is particularly remarkable. Borodin, during his pilgrimage to Weimar in 1877, had occasion to refer modestly to himself as a "Sunday musician," which remark called forth an immediate and cordial reassurance from the great virtuoso to the effect that Sunday was a feast-day and that Borodin was well qualified to officiate! Tchaikovsky, on the other hand, writing to Mme. von Meck in 1878, commits himself to

some exceedingly faint praise in reference to Rimsky-Korsakoff and even to Balakireff from whom, as it will be seen later, he had received some particularly inspiring suggestions, and he indulges in a quite emphatic depreciation of Moussorgsky and Cui. His generalisation is well worth quotation: "The young Petersburg composers are very gifted, but they are all impregnated with the most horrible presumptuousness and a purely amateur conviction of their superiority to all other musicians in the universe."

In reality there was at this time very little of the amateur in point of technique about any of the group, excepting Moussorgsky. Balakireff was, of course, a thorough musician whose erudition had failed to render him an academic. Cui had already established a reputation as an operatic composer; the technical resource displayed by Borodin in his symphony had surprised his friends, and Rimsky-Korsakoff had already emerged from the period of theoretical study which a realisation of his limitations in this respect had prompted him to undergo.

Balakireff besides being the initiator of the circle was also its leader. Under his guidance his companions made first a thorough study of the classics, and then the works of contemporary masters were subjected to a close examination, with a view not only to a complete artistic grounding, but to a discovery of the direction in which tradition could be considered as at fault. The watchword of the circle was individual liberty.

As might be anticipated, these pioneers began little by little to realise that there must be a considerable divergence between their aims if individuality was to

be preserved, and as each began, as it were, to find his feet, a gradual differentiation of method was noticed in their work. Borodin, in a letter dated 1875, put the case very clearly, and employing an exceedingly apt metaphor characterises Balakireff as the hen and his disciples as eggs "which were all alike," but from which sprang chickens that, differing somewhat at first, ceased after a time to resemble one another at all. But in spite of the comparative disruption consequent upon individual development, the circle continued its exchange of ideas through the medium of its output, and the mutual respect of its members was never for a moment endangered.

Mily Alexeivich Balakireff was born at Nijni-Novgorod on January 2, 1837. His mother gave him a rudimentary musical education during his early youth, but he did not begin to study at all seriously until after he had taken a degree at the university of Kazan. At this time he came in contact with Oulibicheff, who invited the youth to his country mansion in the province of Novgorod, and gave him the run of an exceptionally fine literary and musical library. By means of his host's private band he made acquaintance with the principles of orchestration, and in the surrounding country he discovered a fund of folk-song which was destined to become the nucleus of a very fine collection. Balakireff was thus enabled to satisfy at one and the same time his passion for musical erudition, his desire for technical ability and knowledge and his love for the music of the people.

In 1855 he went to live in St. Petersburg, which city he found under the sway of the music of Meyerbeer and Bellini, and he set himself at once to combat this

influence, and with all the energy at his command to advance the cause of musical nationalism. It was then that Oulibicheff, recognising Balakireff's true *métier*, introduced him to Glinka, and thus laid the foundation stone of the glorious edifice whose dome was very soon to be visible from all parts of Europe.

During this period his activity as a composer began. His first work was a fantasia on three Russian themes for piano and orchestra (1857), which was afterwards recast as an orchestral overture, his next a fantasia on the "trio" from the first act of "A Life for the Czar," for piano. Many of his best songs date from this period. One of these early works affords signal proof of the liberality of his nationalistic outlook. The composition of an overture on a Spanish theme given him by Glinka, who had, of course, already realised the potential importance of the folk-melodies of Spain, shows that Balakireff did not confine the propagation of his patriotic ideal to his own country. Patriotism as an ideal must of necessity lose every shred of its ethical foundation unless the toleration of a similar spirit in foreign peoples forms part and parcel of the sentiment, and Balakireff's recognition of the claims of others appears to have been voiced by this hetero-national essay to which ten years later he added as companion the overture on Czechish themes.

In 1861 his plans were well on the way towards fruition, and he found time to create one of his best works—the music to "King Lear"—which is his single incursion into the dramatic region. Seven years later, when making suggestions to Tchaikovsky, who was in thematic difficulties with his "Romeo and

Juliet" overture, he gave full details as to the *modus operandi* employed in the construction of this work. It was in 1862, however, that he was able to launch the institution which has had so immense an influence upon the progress of music in Russia. Together with Lomakin, who had been the teacher of Tchaikovsky at the School of Jurisprudence, and Stassoff, one of its earlier *alumni*, he succeeded in starting the St Petersburg Free School of Music in connection with which he organised and conducted a series of progressive concerts. By means of these concerts he was enabled to reach the poorer section of the public who had been denied the privilege of listening to orchestral music owing to the prohibitive prices of admission to the more fashionable and conservative Imperial Musical Society, and also to offer opportunities of a hearing for the works of budding composers. Thus were produced several of the works of Borodin, Cui, Moussorgsky, Glazounoff and Liadoff. In this year he composed the symphonic poem, "Russia," a work commemorating the thousandth anniversary of the inauguration of the Russian empire by Rurik.

During the winter of 1866-7, he made a journey to Prague where he produced Glinka's operas and from whence he obtained the material for his "Bohemian" symphonic poem. He published at this time his collection of popular Russian songs which contains the germ of many a Russian masterpiece. He also made the first sketches of the symphonic poem, "Thamar." In the letter to Tchaikovsky, already quoted in reference to "King Lear," he gives a very precise idea as to the manner in which he was affected by the creative impulse. "If," he says, "these lines have a good

effect upon you, I shall be very pleased. I have a certain right to hope for this, because your letters do me good. Your last, for instance, made me so unusually light-hearted that I rushed out into the Nevsky Prospect; I did not walk, I danced along, and composed part of my 'Thamar' as I went."

"Thamar" was destined to be regarded as one of his greatest works. Together with "Islamey," the piano fantasia which was one of the most cherished works in the repertory of Liszt, it reflects the composer's passion for the oriental and his intimacy with the melodic and harmonic idiom of the East. It is based upon the poem of Lermontoff which tells the story of a Georgian princess who lived in a castle by the river Terek, and whose custom it was to attract strangers by means of the festivities she never ceased to hold. The stranger was invited to join her in the dance which became more and more animated, and at the moment of supreme exhilaration, he was stabbed by Thamar, and his corpse was pitched into the angry waters of the river. The gorgeous harmonic colouring of this work is the outcome of a tour of the Caucasus, undertaken prior to Balakireff's settlement in St. Petersburg.

In 1869, Balakireff was appointed conductor of the Imperial Musical Society, and one of the earliest works performed under his baton was the "Fatum" of Tchaikovsky, which was afterwards destroyed by the composer. "Fatum" was dedicated to Balakireff, but the latter was not at all pleased with it. After the performance he wrote to the composer, and after certain critical observations, expressed some doubts in reference to Tchaikovsky's attitude towards modern-

ism, and, between the lines, gave some pretty definite indications as to his own ". . . . you are too little acquainted with modern music. You will never learn freedom of form from the classical composers. . . . They can only give you what you knew already when you sat on the students' benches . . ." To the credit of Tchaikovsky be it said that the criticism was not allowed to undermine the friendship that existed between the two masters, and he shows quite plainly in a letter of that period that if he felt that Balakireff's remarks were unduly harsh, he could accept them in the proper spirit. In this epistle is recorded the fact that Tchaikovsky entertained Balakireff and Borodin at a party together with other musicians and *littérateurs*. In this year Balakireff began the actual composition of *Thamar*, and he also revised and published the Spanish overture written in 1857.

In 1873 he retired from the directorship of the Free School, and this post was taken over by Rimsky-Korsakoff. From this time until his death he lived a more or less retired life and passed through several periods of comparative inactivity, induced, it is said, by a religious and mystic frame of mind.

From time to time, however, he awoke from this torpor and showed that he had renounced neither composition nor his interest in the work of others. Borodin, when writing to his friend, Mme. Karmalina (Glinka's niece) made a reference to these periodic disappearances. In January, 1877, he wrote: "Here is a very pleasant and gratifying piece of news of which you doubtless are ignorant. Balakireff, the amiable Balakireff, has come to life again as regards music. He has always been the same Mily Alexeivich, ardent

defender of the sharps and flats and all the minutest details of some composition which formerly he would not hear mentioned. Now he besieges Korsakoff once more with his letters about the Free School, takes the liveliest interest in the composition of concert programmes, works at his 'Thamar,' and is finishing an arrangement, for four hands, of Berlioz's 'Harold in Italy.' . . . In short, he is resuscitated."

Again in 1880, writing to Stassoff to inform him of the success of his first symphony he mentions that when he sent the same intelligence to Balakireff . . . . "he came at once, radiant, to congratulate me . . . . It was nine years since Balakireff had set foot inside my house. But his manner was just the same as if he had only left us the day before . . . The next day he reappeared, gay and radiant . . . . he played the piano, chatted, discussed, gesticulated with the greatest animation. . . . Naturally he let us hear 'Thamar.'"

He finished "Thamar" in 1882, and a year later it received its first performance. In 1884 he dedicated the work to Liszt. During 1883 he accepted the post of director of the Imperial Chapel, and there introduced some searching and necessary reforms.

A strange recrudescence of activity in the direction of composition manifested itself towards the close of his life, when he published a second symphony in D minor—the first, in C, composed in 1897-8, was played at Queen's Hall in 1899—and a piano concerto, his last work, which, although it has on one occasion been announced, has yet to be performed in England.

Its best exponent, Liapounoff, was engaged with his master in one of his last labours—the revision of the



complete works of Glinka. Balakireff died in May, 1910, at St. Petersburg.

Apart from the works already mentioned, he composed a large number of pieces for the piano and made many arrangements of the works of other composers, such as Glinka, Berlioz, Chopin and Liszt. He also orchestrated four pieces of Chopin: *préambule*, *mazurka*, *intermezzo* and *scherzo*, which he published in the form of a suite, and arranged the seventh *mazurka* for strings. His songs comprise two sets of twenty *lieder*, a set of ten songs and two series of ten "romances." There are five works for voice with orchestral accompaniment, and a cantata for soprano solo, chorus and orchestra, composed for the unveiling of Glinka's monument at St Petersburg in 1906.

Regarding his songs, Tchaikovsky signalised his agreement with Mme von Meck, in that "they are actually little masterpieces, and I am passionately fond of some of them. There was a time when I could not listen to 'Selim's Song'\* without tears in my eyes, and now I rank 'The Song of the Golden Fish' very highly."

An early panegyric from the pen of César Cui gives a more general view, as to the value of Balakireff's musical personality: "A musician of the first rank, an inexorable critic of his own works, thoroughly familiar with all music, ancient as well as modern, Balakireff is above all a symphonist." |—.

As for Borodin, he can find no better terms in which

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\* To the text of Lermontoff.

to express his tremendous admiration for Liszt, than to describe him as "a real Balakireff"\*

But surely there could be no more fitting eulogy of this "musician-maker," and none more to his own taste, than a record of the fact that he never betrayed the mission entrusted to him by Glinka, an inheritance which, prompted by his passionate belief in its sacrosanctity, he guarded and cared for so faithfully

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\* This comparison may be presumed to have embraced a reference to Balakireff's exceptional powers as pianist.

## II.

### CÉSAR CUI

NOTWITHSTANDING the fact that he helped to found the association, the position of Cui, among the five—as composer, at least—is distinctly peculiar. There is something rather more than merely suggestive of the paradoxical in the footing of one who advocated nationalism with such intense conviction and whose work as composer was nevertheless little short of a complete negation of his literary efforts on behalf of the cause.

As organiser and agitator, Cui's labours were of immense value in contributing to the indoctrination of the nationalistic idea, not only in Russia, but in western Europe. But as a composer his claim to consideration is exceedingly slight in comparison with that of his colleagues. In one of his operas, "Angelo," he approached in one particular the constructional pattern accepted by the group, in that he disregarded formalistic traditions and adopted in a certain

measure the "melodic recitative," but even in this work, in the planning of which he seems to have been intent on complying with the accepted canons, his chosen dramatic subject was foreign and not Russian and it is not possible to urge on his behalf, as on that of Dargomyjsky (in "The Stone-Guest"), that the text emanated from a compatriot. Further it must be pointed out that the employment of foreign subject matter precluded the introduction of national folk-tunes.

As to the musical value of Cui's compositions, one imagines that although in his case it was probably unconscious, he must have emulated the intention expressed by Seroff in regard to one of his own works, that of seeking a compromise betwixt his own ideals and contemporary musical taste—a method presenting little difficulty to one who, as critic, is given constant opportunities of examining public taste.

In his capacity of critic and literary propagandist, his services to the brotherhood were exceedingly valuable, howbeit the trenchancy of his style was the means of intensifying the quite natural odium evinced by academic opposition to the allied innovators.

César Antonovich Cui was born at Vilna, which is near to the north-eastern boundary of Poland, on January 18, 1835. His father was a Frenchman, who came to Russia in 1812 with Napoleon's army, was severely wounded at Smolensk and was thus prevented from taking part in the disastrous retreat. He decided to establish himself in Russia, and being a man of scholastic attainments, he found a billet as private tutor, which led to his engagement as teacher of French at the Vilna High School. He was quite a good musician and composed songs of a certain merit.

Redomiciled, he took to himself a wife in the person of Julie Gucewicz, who belonged to a small land-owning family in Lithuania. She was a woman of particularly sweet character and subsequently proved a devoted mother to the five children, of whom César Antonovitch was the youngest.

The boy had his first lessons in music from two local teachers, named respectively Hermann and Dio. The latter, who seems to have been the better, taught him the violin. Young Cui also received some assistance from his sister, with whom he used to play duets. This instruction was interrupted in 1845, when he was sent to the Vilna High School, the institution in which his father taught. He had already shown a taste for literature and had become familiar with the works of Dumas, Sue and Hugo. At school, however, he did not succeed in making any particular mark, and it is recorded that he found great difficulty in mastering the German language.

In 1849, during the holidays, he was introduced by his violin master, Dio, to Moniuszko, the Polish composer (1820-72), whose opera, "Halka," had three years previously been produced with success at Warsaw and who lived at this time in Vilna, where he was occupied as church organist. The lessons lasted for about six months, at the end of which, Cui, who was to embrace a military career, entered the St. Petersburg School of Military Engineering. He distinguished himself during his seven years' course of study (1850-7) in such degree as to secure a sub-professorship in the School, and subsequently became an authority on fortification, wrote manuals on the subject, gave lectures at the staff college and at the school of artillery, and

finally attained the rank of lieutenant-general. He had several pupils of distinction, including the present Czar and General Skobelev, whose name will be remembered in connection with the Russo-Turkish War.

His devotion to his profession did not by any means monopolise his attention, and during the period of his military studentship, he found sufficient leisure to occupy himself with music and to conceive some very strong views as to the misguided attitude of the aristocracy towards this art. This secondary vocation was, we are told, for a long time a bone of contention with his military instructors.

In 1856, quite by chance, he was introduced to Balakireff at a "quartet evening" and thus was inaugurated a long and auspicious friendship. In 1857 he laid the foundation of an alliance of equal importance, but of a different nature. He became engaged to be married. The lady of his choice, Bamberg by name, was a pupil of Dargomizsky. About this time, probably as a corollary of awakened affection, he began to compose, and from this period date his two symphonic scherzos; the first, Op. 1, had a musical basis in the letters B. A. B. E. G. from his wife's name, and his own initials, C. C.; the second, Op. 2, was labelled "*à la Schumann*". The first was performed two years later under the direction of Rubinstein.

Soon after their marriage the couple found their resources unequal to the maintenance of a comfortable home, and they decided to open a preparatory school of Engineering. This undertaking proved successful and did not unduly interfere with his musical activities.

In 1859 he composed his first dramatic work, a comic

operetta, "The Mandarin's Son." It shows no signs of originality whatever, is essentially French in manner and as to matter bears a faithful resemblance to the style of Auber. It was intended for private performance and was not put forward as a serious work; the principal rôle was undertaken by his wife and the accompaniment was rendered at the piano.

In this year he brought to completion an opera which had been planned in 1857. It was founded upon an early poem of Pushkin, entitled "The Prisoner of the Caucasus." This opera offers an opportunity of noting the stylistic progress of the composer, for, twenty years later, when Cui desired to see it produced, he was obliged to add a third act to the existing two in order to comply with the condition, then prevailing, that no opera of less than three acts could be admitted to the repertoire of the Imperial Russian Opera.\* In the direction of form, "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," with the exception of its interpolated second act, is conventional and is an echo of the period of its composition. It contains, however, some noteworthy features in the shape of an attention to legitimacy, some attempt at characterisation and a certain felicity in the introduction of local colour.

It was not until 1861, when his third operatic venture was begun, that Cui succeeded in creating a work which was to attract a favourable attention. For the literary basis of this work, "William Ratcliff," he went to Heine's tragedy. In this step, oddly enough, he

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\* This regulation had no rational foundation and was a severe obstacle to the rising operatic composer.

was counselled by Balakireff. He retained, as far as possible, its original form, but added some choruses. Although "William Ratcliff," the music of which is spoken of as being somewhat "tainted by Schumannisms," was not by any means a complete severance from operatic tradition, it is a work of considerable interest from the historical point of view, because in it was made the first attempt to embody, and thus to promulgate, the structural operatic reforms drawn up by the "Five." Tchaikovsky sums up the position in which Cui was placed by this obligation to the accepted creed. "Cui," he says, "is by nature more drawn towards light and piquantly rhythmic French music, but the demands of the 'band' . . . compel him to do violence to his natural gifts and to follow those paths of would-be original harmony which do not suit him"

Tchaikovsky further states that the composition of this opera took ten years, but this was not in accordance with fact. "William Ratcliff" was completed in 1869. It was performed in that year at the Imperial Theatre, St. Petersburg, and met with a rather cold reception.\*

In 1864 Cui entered the field of newspaper criticism, a region in which, as has been said, he has laboured prodigiously on behalf of the musical art. From the beginning he spared no effort in his endeavours to

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\* The critics appear to have considered Cui's effort to break away from operatic tradition as somewhat insufficient; they complained that "William Ratcliff," viewed as a specimen of conformity to Cui's stated principles was more or less unsatisfying.



suppress the Italian operatic vogue and to elevate Russian opera to a state of favour. Whether combating the influence of effete academicism or defending the claims of the cherished nationalistic ideal, his satiric style and causticity of manner combined in enabling him to hold his own, but a perusal of his critical work discloses the fact that on occasion he used the bludgeon when clearly under the impression that he was wielding the rapier. Pen in hand, he seems to have been remarkably biassed and to have found exceeding difficulty in forgiving those who had the temerity to express an opinion contrary to his. But there is no doubt that, despite the obstacles he himself raised, he was instrumental in furthering the progress of music in Russia in a considerable degree, and in drawing attention to the deserving works of contemporary composers—Russian and other. His articles appeared in a variety of Russian journals, and he also contributed to some French musical papers.

In 1871, Cui began his most important opera, "Angelo." The subject, that of Victor Hugo's play of the same name, has much in common with that of Ponchielli's "Gioconda," which was produced in the same year. "Angelo," which has four acts, seems to have occupied most of Cui's time until the date of its performance in 1876. The work differs from "Ratcliff" in nature as in quality. There is less symphonic development and a greater dexterity in adjusting the vocal parts to their text. It contains a remarkable fund of melody, and is now generally regarded as the composer's most solid work; but it has enjoyed very little popularity. The first act was seen and played over, two years prior to its production, by

Tchaikovsky, who subsequently gave his opinion that it was inferior in substance to "William Ratcliff."

For quite a long time after the production of "Angelo," Cui forsook opera and, confining his output to the smaller forms, composed a large number of songs and vocal music generally, and a goodly quantity of little pieces for piano and for violin.

In 1881 he returned to the theatre in order, as already mentioned, to provide the additional act to "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," but this did not lead to an awakening of creative desires in the operatic direction, probably because the modified work had not yet been performed. In this year, however, he wrote one of his few orchestral works, the "Solemn March," Op. 18.

An incident which occurred in the following year led in quite a fortuitous way to the formation of one of those acquaintanceships which now and again are to be credited to the good management of the Fates. The Countess Mercy-Argenteau—an enthusiastic music-lover, who lived in Belgium—received from a friend of hers a copy of some dances by Napravnik, who was at that time the conductor of the Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg, and being interested by them, asked her friend to write to Napravnik for information as to his own works and also as to those of any other Russian\* composers of importance. Napravnik, a musician of academic sympathies, sent her all the required particulars in regard to himself, and replied to the second query in a statement that, beyond Tchaikovsky, he knew of no Russian composers of out-

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\* Napravnik was only Russian by adoption.

standing merit. The Countess, after an examination of the works received, formed the opinion that Napravnik's compositions should be placed in the category of "conductor's music," and those of Tchaikovsky, in her own phrase, left her "cold." In the following year her friend sent her a work of Borodin and a piano polka of Cui. Finding the latter entirely to her taste, she wrote to the composer and received in reply his pamphlet, "Music in Russia." This, as may be supposed, did not neglect to give a full chronicle of the doings of the "Five," and the Countess lost no time, once she had perused the book, in procuring all the available works of the "band." To her enthusiasm is really due the early knowledge and esteem of the modern Russian school in Belgium.

The result of all this was, that in 1885, largely through her intervention, Cui was invited to superintend the production of "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" at Liege. This took place in the first days of 1886. The opera was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and Cui scored a further success in Brussels, where an orchestral suite of his was performed.

By means of his Pianoforte Suite, Op. 40 (1887), which he named "à Argenteau," Cui paid a tribute to the Countess. One of the pieces is entitled "The Cedar," after a giant tree which grew on her estate, and another he called "The Rock," which was also a landmark at Argenteau.

The success of "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" turned Cui's thoughts once more towards opera. "The Saracen," in four acts, derived from Dumas's historical novel, was produced at St. Petersburg in 1889, and in the same year he composed "The Filibusterer," of

which the libretto was drawn from a play by Richepin, a poet for whose texts Cui has shown a decided liking when engaged in song-writing. In the succeeding year he set twenty poems of Richepin to music. "The Filibusterer" was produced at the Opera-Comique (Paris) in 1894, with no great success; "The Saracen" was revived in Moscow in 1902.

Two more works have been added to the list of Cui's dramatic compositions: "The Feast in Plague-time," after Pushkin, a dramatic *scena* in one act, which appeared in 1900, and a setting of Maupassant's novel, "M'selle Fifi," which was performed at Moscow in November, 1903. At a comparatively late age Cui returned to Russian texts, which, as a source of inspiration, had been ignored since 1886, when he had issued a set of seven songs by Pushkin and Lermontoff. In 1899 he published settings of twenty-five poems by the former, and in 1902, in addition to seven vocal quartets, he composed twenty-one songs to the words of Nekrassoff.

Cui's services to Russian music, rendered through the medium of literature, will probably be overlooked, or at least, under-estimated, in time to come, because an adequate appreciation of their value is only properly to be gained by those who can look back to the time when the war on behalf of nationalism and progress against Italian and German influence and academicism was actually being waged.

Conservative opposition to the liberalism of the group, was naturally very strong. It must be borne in mind also that the ideal of nationalism, as expressed by the "Five," was the object of scorn and derision, not only because the academic party, the followers of the two Rubinsteins and Tchaikovsky, considered them-

selves or their output quite sufficiently Russian, but because of the circumstances attending the beginnings of the group—that the allied pioneers were “amateurs” and that their knowledge was of a kind which might be called empirical. Cui’s party, on the other hand, regarded the music of their opponents as inimical to the interests of nationalism, because they did not consider it to be truly Russian, but rather, Western music. They held that Rubinstein and Tchaikovsky were slaves to the influences of the occidental traditions, a bondage the continuance of which could only terminate in the extinction of truly national music.

Cui’s polemical ardour, which he inherited from his father, his ironical style and the ruthlessness of his attacks upon the opposing faction, were, no doubt, responsible for retarding the *rapprochement* which has since taken place between the parties. When it is remembered, for instance, that Rubinstein was characterised by Cui as not being a Russian composer but “merely a Russian who composes,” it will easily be understood that the hatchet was not of dimensions calculated to facilitate expeditious burial! Cui usually managed to introduce a bitterness into his references to Tchaikovsky which was keenly resented by the latter, and on the appearance, in 1874, of Tchaikovsky’s opera, “The Opritchnik,” Cui instituted a quite unnecessary comparison between this work and Moussorgsky’s “Boris Godounoff.”

Tchaikovsky occasionally retorted, thus pouring spirit upon the controversial flame, and he may certainly be considered to have done himself little credit in averring that Cui was not a specialist in music, but in military fortification.

But, putting aside Cui's unfortunate tendency towards spitefulness, it must be claimed for him that Western knowledge of the modern Russian musical ideal and the manner of its expression is very largely due to his efforts. It is to the publication of his "History of Music in Russia" that France owes its close acquaintance with Russian music, and but for the sympathies of the French, which have resulted in providing a break in the long Westward journey, the production in England of the greatest works of the nationalistic school would probably have been delayed until their idiom had grown sufficiently old-fashioned to have lost their appeal as emanations of a pioneer movement.

Cui is the only survivor of the "Invincible Band."

### III.

#### BORODIN.

IN passing from Cui to Borodin one is provided with a remarkable study in contrasts. The influence of the former's compositions upon subsequent musical history may be considered as *nil*. That of Borodin is immeasurable. Cui, as has been noted, inherited with the French blood of his father a taste for things western and much of his music would pass as French. Borodin had the strongest sympathies with the east, due to his descent, and revealed in nearly all his published works. Cui was of a disputative turn of mind and loved few things better than a controversial encounter in which his pugnacity could be given full vent. Borodin's disposition was particularly sympathetic and lovable and he was happiest in making friendships of a permanent order. Forsaking contrasts and seeking resemblances, we discover that Borodin distributed his activities over two distinct vocations and achieved in each a superlative distinction. There is here a sufficient answer to those who

contend that the serious pursuit of music is incompatible with a proper attention to a second and legitimately lucrative occupation. We have hardly finished chronicling the life-work of a creative musician, who was considered sufficiently equipped with special knowledge to be entrusted with the military instruction of his future sovereign, when we are confronted with a figure whose influence in the sphere of musical composition was exceedingly far-reaching, not only in his own country, but abroad in Western Europe, whose advocacy of the emancipation of women at a period considerably anterior to the publication of "Doll's House" may safely be termed prophetic, and whose scientific treatises have become standard works of reference. However deficient in musical technique Borodin may have been, one has only to remember his second symphony and his sociological labours to perceive that the limitations in the one could have been sufficiently dissipated had he chosen to refrain from pursuing the other. This hypothetical rearrangement of his activities would still leave to us, in addition to the output of a consummate musician, the "Researches upon the Fluoride of Benzole" and "The Solidification of Aldehydes."

Alexander Porphyrievich Borodin was born at St. Petersburg on October 31, 1834. He was the natural son of Prince Guedeanoff, a descendant of the hereditary rulers of the kingdom of Imeretia, one of the divisions of Georgia made at its partition by Alexander I in 1424. Imeretia enjoys the shelter of the Caucasian mountains, which endows its climate with an unusual clemency.

It is to this descent that Borodin's oriental tendency



is to be traced and also his peculiarly striking physiognomic cast. His truly spontaneous nationalism which, according to a French admirer, "exuded from every pore," made itself apparent and persisted in spite of the circumstance that, unlike his colleagues, Balakireff, Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff, he did not spend his youth in the country, nor did he come, as they, into early contact with the Russian peasantry. The opportunity which fell to them of storing up bucolic sketches for future enlargement was denied him. The nationalism of Borodin is a pure product of heredity and owes nothing to environment.

His father at the time of Borodin's birth was sixty-two years old and his mother but twenty-five; to this disparity in the parents' ages has been attributed the weakness in his constitution, which was probably the cause of the occasional fits of deep depression from which he suffered.

His mother gave a laudable attention to his education, and the musical side cannot have been neglected, for at nine years of age he began already to make some experiments in composition. About this time his taste for the scientific became active, and the two proclivities were fostered through the agency of the companionship of his playmate, Stchigleff, who afterwards became a successful teacher of music. The intimacy with Stchigleff lasted for a number of years. They went together to concerts, and in order to gain a close acquaintance with chamber-music, for which they had a special regard, they took lessons, Borodin on the 'cello and flute, and Stchigleff on the violin. In 1847 Borodin made his first completed creative essay,

a concerto for flute and piano, and a little later he wrote a trio for two violins and 'cello on a theme from "Robert the Devil."

In 1850, when in his sixteenth year, it was decided that Borodin should embrace a medical career, and he entered accordingly the St Petersburg Academy of Medicine. He remained faithful to the muse, and although he prosecuted his scientific studies with vigour, he found time to cultivate his taste for music, to which end he frequently devoted the "small hours." He availed himself of every possible opportunity of participating in the performance of chamber music, and these were frequently offered him at the house of his friend, Gavroushkievich, an attaché to the Imperial Chancery. At this time he seems to have inclined towards German music, owing perhaps to the circumstance that in deference to his mother's dislike of the habits of Russian students, he foregathered, whenever possible, with Germans. He did not neglect the technical side of musical study, and in 1854 we find him trying his hand at a three-part fugue. A Scherzo in B minor for piano belongs to the same period. This preoccupation with music obtained for him the displeasure of his science professor, who foresaw the danger that might arise from a complete absorption in music, an obsession which at that time seemed imminent. Interesting accounts of his musical doings during his medical novitiate were later embodied by Stchigleff in his memoirs.

That Borodin did not fail to satisfy his preceptors is proved by his appointment in 1856 as surgeon at an army hospital—a circumstance which later assumed the greater importance, because it was here that he

first met Moussorgsky. The first stage of the acquaintanceship did not last long because the principal medical officer at the hospital, at whose house they occasionally met, resigned his post soon after, and the two musicians thus lost sight of each other and did not meet again for some three years. This abortive association was not, however, entirely unproductive, for the influence of Moussorgsky's already emphatic views as to the value of nationalism as a source of musical inspiration was not without its effect on Borodin, and is said to have finally emancipated the latter from his dangerous affection for German music.

Borodin took his degree and became a doctor of medicine in 1858, and in the following year he began a scientific pilgrimage, at the expense of the Russian government, which lasted the greater part of three years, during which he busied himself in studying the theories held and the methods employed at various noted centres. He travelled in the company of the celebrated chemist, Mendeleieff, and a party of students. They visited in turn, Venice, Verona and Milan; thence they travelled to Austria and Germany and later a short time was spent in Paris. A protracted stay was made at Heidelberg, and here Borodin made the acquaintance of Catherine Sergeievna Protopova, a lady whose personal charm was intensified in Borodin's eyes by an impeccable taste for music. She afterwards became his wife, and to judge by the subsequent correspondence, the union must have been a singularly happy one.

During these travels, Borodin's attention was not entirely absorbed by their primary object. Whilst at Heidelberg he composed a Sextet in D. This can

hardly have been regarded as a serious effort, written, as the composer informs us it was, "to please the Germans" It was performed during 1860 at Heidelberg, but was never published

In 1862, on his return to Russia, he received the appointment of assistant lecturer at the St Petersburg Academy of Medicine. In this year he was introduced to Balakireff, with whom Moussorgsky had begun to study, and Borodin was then shown certain specimens of nationalistic music, among others the first symphony of Rimsky-Korsakoff, which Balakireff and Moussorgsky played over to him on the piano This was the beginning of Borodin's serious devotion to music. Recognising the limited nature of his technique as composer, he placed himself under Balakireff's guidance, with a view to increasing his resources This he must have achieved with rapidity, for it was but a little later that he started working upon his first symphony (in E flat), which occupied him for five years

His marriage took place in 1863, and it was in this year that he undertook some further lectures in chemistry, to be delivered at the Academy of Forestry. This extra work, coming as it did at a time when he was busily engaged with Balakireff, must have brought in its train a considerable amount of mental fatigue, and there was ample evidence soon after that Borodin's varied activities were inimical to the interests of his health. But he took little account of the strain upon his constitution, and inaugurated a campaign on behalf of the emancipation and higher education of women, a labour which ultimately bore fruit in the foundation of the School of Medicine for Women, at

which institution he afterwards taught, remaining on the staff and taking a deep interest in the movement for the remainder of his life.

The Symphony in E flat, begun in 1862, received its first performance at the hands of the Russian Musical Society, of which Balakireff was then the conductor, in 1869. Owing partly to the inefficiency of the copyist, the band parts were far from perfect, and this, coupled with the unfamiliar idiom of the composer, was responsible for certain misgivings on the part of the orchestra during rehearsal. At the actual performance, however, the success of the symphony was not long in doubt. The scherzo had to be repeated, and at the close of the work Borodin received a very cordial testimony of his audience's esteem.

Some idea as to the technical improvement effected by the course of study with Balakireff is to be gathered by reference to a letter which Borodin received later from Liszt, who praised the symphony very highly after hearing it at Baden-Baden in 1880. "The best connoisseurs, as well as a very numerous public applauded you heartily," wrote Liszt.

According to Tchaikovsky, this symphony was the means of making Borodin's reputation in Germany, but the St. Petersburg critics were not disposed to forget the origins of the "Five" and did not fail to make Borodin the scapegoat of this coterie of "soldiers, sailors and chemists." Seroff succeeded in surpassing himself in gratuitous impertinence by writing that "a symphony by somebody of the name of Borodin pleased very few hearers, and only the friends of the composer applauded . . . ."

Borodin was not the sort of man to be deceived by

any false demonstration of approval, and the fact that he derived great encouragement from the result of the performance of his first symphonic essay is sufficient testimony to the genuineness of its reception. He began to work upon an opera after Mey's drama, "The Czar's Betrothed," but seems to have felt that his powers were not yet ripe for such an undertaking, for after a considerable amount of labour upon it, he abandoned the work. This period is notable, however, for a quite remarkable activity (considering the varied claims upon his attention), and in the three years following the production of the first symphony, he wrote some of his finest songs. These, in order of their appearance, are "The Sleeping Beauty," "Song of the Dim Forest," "Dissonance," "The Queen of the Ocean," "My Song is Bitter," and "The Sea," and all have attained a permanent esteem in spite of the critical displeasure they provoked at the time of their publication. Laroche, who succeeded Seroff as musical correspondent on the St Petersburg "Golos," and who affected an attitude which had much in common with the earlier manner of his predecessor, contributed an article which is a striking example of the outspoken method of contemporary criticism. The notice refers in particular to "The Sleeping Beauty." "The greater part of this romance," said Laroche, "is written *pianissimo*. No doubt the composer uses this mode of expression wisely out of consideration for his audience, or it may be from a sense of shame, as things are whispered which one would not dare to say aloud. And certainly in all his works he seems to be bent on giving his hearers some disagreeable sensation. The title of one of his songs, 'Dissonance,' appears to be

his motto. Once only, in his quartet, he seems to have abjured his ideal. Reflecting on the abundance of his cacophonies he wrote one day in self-defence, 'My Song is Bitter'; but this good inspiration passed away too soon and ended in nothing, for last autumn he published, through Bessel, three new romances which are steeped in the old poison. It is hard to believe, but none the less indisputable, that this bitter enemy of music is not without talent, for side by side with the unwholesome and misshapen extravagances with which his work abounds, we occasionally find rich harmonies. After all, it may be that the impulse which inclines him towards what is unlovely is contrary to his native instinct, and is only the bitter fruit, of a defective education in art."

In 1871 Borodin began once more to prepare for the composition of an opera, but although he obtained from Stasoff the necessary dramatic substance—an ancient national epic—"The Epic of the Army of Igor"—and made an infinite amount of research in order thoroughly to enter into the spirit of the period (the twelfth century), he seems again to have suffered from a sort of disenchantment. He decided, queerly enough, that subjects such as that of "Igor" were not to be fitly embodied in opera.

He resolved to occupy himself instead with a second symphony, but had hardly finished the first movement, when his attention was drawn once more to the theatre. The director of the Russian Opera, Guédéonoff, who was himself a dramatic author of some considerable power, approached, through Stasoff, four of the allied composers, Cui, Borodin, Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff, with the suggestion that a composite work

should be written by them—it was to take the form of an opera-ballet—on the subject of "Mlada," which was derived from a historic chronicle dating from pre-Christian times in Russia. "Mlada" was to have four acts. Guédéonoff made himself responsible for the libretto, the actual ballet music was to be written by Minkus, who had recently returned from a successful sojourn in Paris, where he had collaborated in a similar enterprise with Delibes, and the four composers were each to provide the vocal music of one act. To Borodin fell the last act. None of his colleagues was more enthusiastic than Borodin, who entered into the scheme with ardour and paid a characteristic attention to the details of atmosphere and local colour. He studied the customs, beliefs and religious ceremonies of the pagan Slavs and made every possible research likely to contribute to the artistic value of his work. He was rewarded in the end by a general acknowledgment of the superiority of his last act over those provided by his friends, who were the first, it must be said, to congratulate him. In the end the whole scheme fell through. The production was to have been carried out on the most sumptuous lines, but the question of the inordinate expenditure, which would have been involved, seems to have been overlooked by Guédéonoff until the material was well-nigh complete. The project was suddenly abandoned and Guédéonoff resigned his post. Borodin's contribution was revised after his death, published, and performed under the direction of Rimsky-Korsakoff, who was so impressed with the beauty of "Mlada" as subject-matter that he actually made use, later on, of the whole



libretto The resultant work was performed with great success at St. Petersburg in 1893.

It is not surprising that the praise bestowed upon his "Mlada" music should have inspired Borodin to return to "Prince Igor." He was further encouraged to proceed with this work by a former pupil who had recently returned from the Caucasus and who was deeply impressed, both by Borodin's intimate knowledge of the subject of "Igor" and the appropriateness of such of the music as had been committed to paper.

The libretto of "Prince Igor" is a very slight affair and is singularly lacking in dramatic interest. The opera consists of a prologue and four acts, which seems more than ample space for so thin a plot. The prologue shows the market-place of Poutivle, the town occupied by Igor, Prince of Seversk. Igor is about to pursue the Polovtsi, a nomadic eastern tribe of raiders, who have already sustained defeat at the hands of Sviatoslav, Prince of Kiev. Disregarding the evil portent presaged by an eclipse of the sun, and deaf to the appeals of the townsfolk, Ivan takes his departure with his son, Vladimir, having left his wife, Princess Jaroslavna, in the care of her brother, Prince Galitzky.

The first act is divided into two scenes. The first reveals the conspiracy organised by Prince Galitzky against the absent Igor. He is assisted in the spreading of disaffection in the town by two hired rascals, Eroschka and Skoula, who are relied upon for the comic interest of the opera. In the second scene, Princess Jaroslavna is seen lamenting her husband's absence. Her fears against the disloyalty of Galitzky are increased when she hears that some young girls

have been abducted by him. The scene closes with the arrival of the news that Igor and Vladimir are prisoners, and that the Polovtsi are advancing upon Poutivle. The second act introduces the element of pre-nuptial love. This and the succeeding act takes place in the Polovtsian camp. Vladimir has succumbed to the beauty of Kontschakovna, the chieftain's daughter, and at nightfall serenades her. Their love passages are interrupted by Igor, who now mindful of the omen of the eclipse, is possessed by the fear that disaster threatens Poutivle. He is approached by Ovlour, a Christian convert, who exhorts him to escape and promises his assistance. Igor refuses on the ground that he would be dishonoured by thus abusing the comparative freedom which has been allowed him. At dawn Kontschak, the chieftain, appears and pays a tribute to the bravery of his captive and invites him to participate in a festival which is to take place on the following day. He is anxious to show his appreciation of Igor's valour by treating him with every possible friendliness. At the opening of the third act, the attacking force under Khan Gsak returns from Poutivle with prisoners and loot. Igor is appalled by the disaster. Vladimir succeeds in convincing him that his first duty is to consider his people, and the son who backs up his precept by signifying his willingness to renounce Kontschakovna, finally induces his father to fly. Ovlour, having disorganised the guard by means of a liberal application of *koumiss*, an intoxicating beverage, brings horses. But they have reckoned without Kontschakovna, who has overheard their plans. She entreats Vladimir not to leave her, and only the reappearance of Igor saves the young

prince from surrendering anew to her enchantments. Vladimir is distracted by the conflicting claims of love and duty. The dramatic situation is intensified by the exhortations of Ovlour, who calls repeatedly to the prisoners to make good their escape. Kontschakovna, realising the danger of losing Vladimir, gives the alarm, and although the father escapes, the son is held in a bondage which is eventually dissolved by his marriage with Kontschakovna. The scene of the fourth act is laid once more at Poutivle. After an extremely pathetic lament, Jaroslavna, still bewailing the loss of her husband, is suddenly attracted by the appearance of two riders on the horizon. These prove to be Igor and Ovlour, and soon after, the reunion of husband and wife is effected. Eroschka and Skoula, who have witnessed the return, are consumed with the fear of Igor's vengeance, and as an expedient to establish ostensible evidence of loyalty they make use of their early intelligence of Igor's safety and are themselves the bearers of the good tidings to the populace.

It will be seen that the dramatic material is not particularly rich in incident. But the vast scope for the introduction of oriental colouring was not likely to be neglected by one of Borodin's tendencies, and he was well prepared by his studies. The festival of the Polovtsi gave him a splendid opportunity for a musical treatment of the barbaric, and the dances and choruses in the second and third acts testify to his capacity for such a task. The love scene between Vladimir and Kontschakovna gives evidence of his power of depicting human passion in musical terms. While the passage in the third act between Kontscha-

kovna, Igor and Vladimir shows his mastery in the rendering of psychic torments by the same means.

In the composition of "Prince Igor" Borodin soon discovered, through his own very marked tendencies, that a strict adherence to the tenets of the "five" was not to be thought of. His own words best describe his feelings in respect of the question of operatic construction. ". . . from the dramatic point of view I have always been unlike the majority (of his friends) Recitative does not enter into my nature or disposition. Although according to some critics I do not handle it altogether badly, I am far more attracted to melody and *cantilena*. I am more drawn to definite and concrete forms. In opera, as in decorative art, details and minutiae are out of place. Bold outlines are only necessary; all should be clear and straightforward and fit for practical performance from the vocal and instrumental standpoint. The voices should occupy the first place, the orchestra the second. I am no judge of the way in which I shall succeed, but my opera will be nearer akin to 'Russlan' than to 'The Stone-Guest.' That I can vouch for." The passage immediately following is no less interesting. "It is curious to see how all the members of our set agree in their praise of my work. While controversy rages amongst us on every other subject, all, so far, are pleased with 'Igor.' Moussorgsky, the ultra-realist, the innovating lyrico-dramatist, Cui, our master, Balakireff, so severe as regards form and tradition, Vladimir Stassoff himself our valiant champion of everything that bears the stamp of novelty or greatness."

The progress of the opera was delayed from various causes. Borodin's health was not of the best, and hi

wife had become more or less of an invalid. His work at the Academy of Medicine was exceedingly heavy, and in addition to these adverse circumstances, he was embarrassed by an insufficiency of income. In the end Borodin was unable to finish his opera and it was not until three years after his death that it received its first performance. Its completion was undertaken by Rimsky-Korsakoff and Glazounoff, his pupil. Between them they orchestrated the greater portion of the work and filled in many gaps. The overture had never been written down by Borodin, but Glazounoff had heard it played by the composer so frequently as to enable him to give a faithful account of it on paper, and it was orchestrated according to Borodin's own expressed plans. He had left a good many materials for their guidance, and of these the editors availed themselves to the utmost.

By the end of 1876 Borodin had finished his second symphony, and early in February, 1877, it was performed at St. Petersburg under the direction of Napravnik. For this work he had gathered a goodly harvest of inspiration from the researches made in preparing to deal with "Prince Igor," and although the symphony is not actually written to a definite programme, it is instinct with the spirit of nationalism.

"Listening to this music," said one of the critics, "we recall the memory of the old Russian warriors in all their uncouthness, but also in all their grandeur of character." The production of the symphony was not attended with any particular success, but its later influence on subsequent Russian compositions is incalculable and it is not surprising to find a record of an early opinion of Felix Weingartner to the effect that

this is the most important work of the modern Russian school known to him. But what should appear remarkable, at least to those who are not constantly taking note of the contemporary estimation of progressive music and observing the perpetually recurring reproach of iconoclasm invariably levelled against the pioneer—a permanent feature of musical history—is that Borodin was freely spoken of as a "musical nihilist." In respect of Borodin there was the same tendency to regard the revelation of a new aspect of music as a wanton destruction or wilful disregard of every tradition. But there is no lack of instances of this species of faulty judgment in the history of the arts, and at the present moment, as at so many other epochs in musical history, the music which not long since was alleged to be sending the art "to the dogs," is being credited with those attributes which are considered likely to gain for it the most cordial approval of the gods!

In 1877 Borodin made another pilgrimage to western Europe. He travelled with two of his science pupils. In search of new ideas, they first visited some of the principal German universities, and later on Borodin continued the journey to Weimar in order to attain one of its chief objects, a personal acquaintance with Liszt. Liszt's regard for the Russian school had been a source of much satisfaction to the "five," and a perusal of the letters written by Borodin to his wife during his stay at Weimar, not only affords a comprehensive portrayal of Liszt's personality, but shows that the friend of Wagner was blessed with an openmindedness and a freedom from the usual distressing effect of partisanship quite uncommon in those who have devoted

themselves to the interests of some one master. At the first meeting, Liszt seems to have been eager to gain news of Borodin's colleagues and in view of his intimacy with their work and his esteem for it, it seems all the more strange that it should have fallen short of achieving a general popularity throughout Europe. Borodin's account of this meeting is particularly happy in that it creates a vivid atmosphere which enables us the better to reconstruct the scene between the two musicians. "Scarcely had I sent in my card when there arose before me, as though out of the ground, a tall figure with a long nose, a long black frock-coat and long white hair. 'You have written a fine symphony,' growled the tall figure, in a resonant voice and in excellent French; and he stretched out a long hand and a long arm. 'Welcome! I am delighted to see you. Only two days ago I played your symphony to the grand duke, who was charmed with it. The first movement is perfect. Your andante is a *chef d'œuvre*. The scherzo is enchanting . . . and then this passage is so ingenious!' and then his long fingers began to 'peck,' to use the picturesque expression which Moussorgsky made use of to describe the progression of distant intervals, pizzicati, in the scherzo and finale of my first symphony. He ran on incessantly; his strong hand caught my own and held me down to a sofa, where there was nothing left for me to do but nod approval and lose myself in thanks. The fine face of the old man, with its energetic, vivacious features, was uplifted before me, while he talked incessantly, overwhelming me with questions, passing from French to German and vice versa." Borodin also describes the daily life of Liszt in Weimar. He presents an admir-

able picture of the relations between the great pianist and his pupils and of the constant stream of visitors, celebrated musicians, all anxious to pay homage to Liszt.

Borodin, like Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff, did very little to add to the repertory of the piano, but one of his two contributions calls for mention here, as it provides evidence of Liszt's sympathy with the new Russian school. Borodin was one day asked by one of his adopted daughters (he had several) to play a duet with her. He was astonished at the proposal, knowing that the girl was no pianist, but was in a way reassured when she explained that the object of their concerted efforts was to be the pianistic device known in England as "chop-sticks." Borodin improvised a polka on the theme and subsequently submitted the notion to his friends. The upshot was one of those collaborative enterprises inaugurated by the joint composition of "Mlada" and since become quite popular with Russian composers. Borodin was joined by Cui, Liadoff and Rimsky-Korsakoff. These "Paraphrases," consisting of twenty-four variations and fourteen little pieces, were published; and quickly attracted the notice of Liszt, who was charmed by the humour of the idea, both in regard to form and substance. As a practical proof of his sincere esteem, Liszt composed an additional number in the form of a prelude to a polka by Borodin. This was embodied in the second edition.

On his return from the tour of Germany, Borodin set to work again on "Prince Igor," finished his first quartet, that in A major on a theme taken from the finale of Beethoven's Quartet, Op. 130, and in 1880 he composed his symphonic poem, "In the Steppes of



Central Asia." This, like the second symphony, derives a great deal from the exhaustive research undertaken during the preparation of the literary basis of "Prince Igor" It was written for a series of living pictures organised to celebrate the silver jubilee of Alexander II, in which were to figure a series of episodes relative to the history of Russia. Borodin's symphonic poem describes in some very vivid music, the passage of a caravan across the desert under escort of Russian soldiers. By means of two themes, one Russian and the other oriental, which subsequently mingle in the harmonic scheme, the composer contrives to effect a musical reproduction of the figures in the foreground of his picture. The immensity and monotony of the prairie is suggested by a long and persistent note given to the violins. This work in its composer's lifetime was quite the most popular of all his compositions, and in his own words had "gone the round of Europe from Christiania to Monaco, and in spite of its patriotic programme (the success of Russian arms in Asia), this work has been encored almost everywhere and often repeated by desire, as at the Strauss concerts in Vienna and the Lamoureux concerts in Paris."

In 1881 Borodin paid another visit to Germany and had quite an accidental meeting with Liszt. Through the latter's intervention, the Russian's advice was sought as to the rendering of Rimsky-Korsakoff's symphonic suite, "Antar," then in rehearsal for the Magdeburg festival, where it was to be conducted by Nikisch. During this year he wrote a song—to the text of Pushkin—dedicated to the memory of Moussorgsky who had just died.

In 1885 he joined Cui in the visit to Belgium, already spoken of in the chapter dealing with that composer. In Borodin's lifetime nowhere did he find a more sympathetic regard for his works than in Belgium. The honours there paid him seem to have been such as to turn the head of even this modest man, and in a letter to his wife written during this visit, he expresses opinions as to the Belgian character which might well be calculated to astonish the Belgians themselves. The Countess Mercy-Argenteau worked hard on his behalf and as a result he was invited to conduct his own works at various musical centres in Belgium, notably at Antwerp where an international exhibition was being held. His second symphony was everywhere received with the warmest enthusiasm. So great was his success that he had to refuse several engagements as conductor, and a proposal was actually made by certain musical organisations that they should call upon the Russian authorities to grant an extension of his leave. Finally he arranged to pay a return visit to Belgium at the end of the year and he then found himself the object of an idolatry which might well have flattered the most hardened *prima donna*. He was "besieged with demands for autographs" and "overwhelmed with compliments." The after result of these visits shows that these demonstrations were sincere, for the works of Borodin were thenceforth looked upon in Belgium as of classic value.

He paid a tribute to the Countess by dedicating to her a suite comprising seven small pieces for piano, one of his choicest works, and a septet for voices and piano, which was published at Liège. Jadoul, her

friend, who had been primarily instrumental in bringing the Russians to the notice of the Countess, was also remembered, and to him was dedicated a scherzo in A flat for orchestra.

Borodin's last creative period profited in the quality of its product by his successes in Belgium, which inspired him with something like a complete confidence in himself. He seems to have recognised the need to repair his neglect of the piano and composed a serenade for four hands, which was published before his death. He joined once more with his friends in celebration of Pellaieff, the publisher, whose efforts on behalf of modern music they wished to acknowledge conjointly. Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Liadoff and Glazounoff each wrote one movement of a quartet, the theme being founded on the musical signification of the components B (B flat), La (A), Eff (F). The second string quartet in D, of which the lovely nocturne (the third movement), has been accorded the honour, perhaps a doubtful one, of frequent isolated performance, also dates from this year. Lastly there were two movements of a Symphony in A minor which was never finished but which was later orchestrated by Glazounoff.

This period of the composer's life must have been exceedingly depressing. His wife, whose health did not permit of her residence in St. Petersburg, lay ill at Moscow, and her mother, who was on terms of the greatest affection with her son-in-law, was on her death-bed. Mme. Borodin recovered but did not long outlive her husband. Hardly had Borodin returned to St. Petersburg and his work, when, on February 15, 1887, he died suddenly, during the height of the gaiety of a

fancy dress ball, from the effects of a ruptured aneurism.

Borodin was buried in the Nevsky Monastery, where there is now a monument decorated with thematic references to his composition and chemical formulas, designed to serve as a memorial of his dual career as scientist and musician. Testimony to his social activities took the shape of a silver crown which was placed on his coffin and which bore the following inscription: "To the founder, protector and defender of the School of Medicine for Women, to the supporter and friend of the students. From the women doctors qualified between 1872 and 1887."

Soon after his death, Borodin's friends met at his house and it was then decided that the unfinished works should be entrusted for completion to Glazounoff and Rimsky-Korsakoff.

#### IV.

#### MOUSSORGSKY.

AMONG the terms employed to describe human characteristics there are few which have been so distorted by misapplication as that of Puritan. In Britain, through its association with a certain primitive religious sect, Puritanism has come to imply an assemblage of an unlimited number of negative virtues in a single individual. In choosing the word Puritan to classify the artistic mission of Moussorgsky it is necessary, therefore, to guard against any misconception which might arise from its association with the customary sectarian sense of the word and to emphasise the fact that it is being used, not in its usual relation to human frailties, but rather as a term which signifies a determined repudiation of the conventional in art—a repudiation which becomes active directly the conventional shows any sign of dominating artistic humanity.

It would not be just to place Moussorgsky in the same category as Gluck and Wagner (both of whom may be regarded as Puritans) because Moussorgsky,

the musical art has been loaded. The pure genius of music, in consequence of an ever-increasing number of forms, finds himself more and more hampered by the obligations of form which musical society imposes upon him. The creative genius whose material does not quite fit into the approved mould, for instance, of either the symphony or the freer symphonic poem will seek such freedom as will no longer interfere with the expression of his musical thoughts and feelings. Sooner or later, however, the academic mind, by a judicious adjustment of its rules and regulations, contrives to find a new classification; the latest heresy is duly sanctioned and pigeon-holed and our genius, without any intention of so doing, has contributed one more obstacle to those already threatening to hamper expression in the free spirits of posterity.

The development of the party system in politics proceeds on much the same lines. The advent of an original thinker into politics is invariably signalled by an addition to the existing classifications. The ordinary popular representative becomes embroiled in the complexus of the political system, and his undue respect for the prejudices of his party quickly stifles the promptings of his private conscience. The mind of the original thinker is not thus enslaved, and his policy is directed unswervingly and ruthlessly towards the conduct of national affairs in accordance with the dictates or requirements of national and inter-national integrity. As in the case of the creative artist, however, the compiler of chronicles eventually finds a suitable label by which the individualistic or unattached policy can be more or less conveniently classi-

fied and the political machine becomes further clogged with a new set of party obligations.

The development of Moussorgsky's musical faculty can hardly be said to have depended neither upon heredity nor environment, but one is inclined to assent that it was in spite of them that his unique capacity for artistic purification flourished.

The rise of the new Russian school as a whole was remarkable for a disregard of the accepted conventions of musical composition.

In this matter the ideal of nationalism is to be looked upon as a question of minor importance compared with that worship of sincerity and legitimacy which figured so largely in the aims of the group. But without depreciating the value of the individual reformatory efforts of the "five" it can safely be asseverated that it was Moussorgsky who rendered the greatest service. The nature of his genius just happened to be in tune with the programme of the group—a programme dictated by pure idealism—and he alone faithfully adhered to its articles. In him the nationalistic principle was inspired as much by his anxiety to alleviate the sufferings of the people and to widen their mental horizon by means of his art as by his recognition of a need for its emancipation. There was never the slightest suspicion of compromise, of any obeisance to expediency in his artistic conduct. From earliest childhood he evinced an affectionate regard for submerged humanity and nothing could have been more natural than that such an unbending Puritan should attribute an equal importance to the elements of legitimacy and nationalism to be dis-

covered in the documentary articles of reform with which Cui has familiarised us.

In the domain of legitimacy, both in regard to dramatic music and that of song, Moussorgsky was again peculiarly fitted to carry these reformatory precepts into actual practice. Convinced that artistic culture, or rather cultivation, is destructive of originality and freshness he hoped that by remaining as far as possible an unsophisticated and natural musician he would minimise the risk of unconscious reversion to an immediately preceding type. The acceptance of the term "conductor's music" is an acknowledgment that constant association with the creations of musicians past and present is destructive of originality and productive of stereotyped phrases. Moussorgsky's fear was that by studying accepted forms he might arrive at an undue respect for them and this he considered inimical to the interests of the great work of reform which it was his intention to undertake. It is a little difficult to arrive at a just estimate as to the real extent to which his technique was limited and to determine whether the supposed "limitations" were, in fact, the product of an instinctive feeling for the future trend of music, because so many of his works have been "revised" since his death by Rimsky-Korsakoff, a composer whose mentality was not of a kind likely to secure a sufficient insight into the prophetic quality of the work of his friend. It is thus supposed by more than one authority that many features which deserved to survive were, in the process of an over-conscientious revision, toned down until their essential significance was obscured.

Moussorgsky's devotion to the people is clearly ex-



emplified in his two operas in which, as has often been remarked, the people are the protagonists as far as the actual dramatic content is concerned, and their importance is musically signified by the abundant employment of folk-song and folk-lore.

In the realm of vocalism he made a complete revolution. Up to his time the vocal solo had been regarded as a piece of tuneful music for the voice to the accompaniment of a piano. Moussorgsky made no deliberate sacrifice of melody but he refused to allow the sense of the word to be subordinated to considerations of melodic beauty, and, to an extent undreamed of by Dargomijsky, he succeeded in making vocal music conform to the inflections of the speaking voice and interpret the uttered word. This plan was also adopted in his operas in which works he has provided a powerful instrument for the emancipation of the operatic artist. There is absolutely nothing in the operas of Moussorgsky which could for a moment be regarded as encouraging the glorification of the individual performer. Everything makes for the truth and beauty of the whole.

Moussorgsky's artistic creed and behaviour may be summed up as a single-minded devotion to the principle of "art for life's sake," and if not by virtue of his constancy to this ideal then by the immense influence which, through a comparatively limited output, he has exerted in the direction of the legitimisation of the musico-dramatic as well as the vocal art, he may be considered as a figure unique in the annals of music.

Modeste Petrovich Moussorgsky was born at his father's country house at Karevo, in the Government of Pskoff—a village two hundred miles or so to the

south of St Petersburg—on March 28, 1839. His father belonged to the small landowner class and possessed moderate means. The child passed his first ten years in ranging over a countryside which is varied and picturesque, and was thus in close touch from the beginning with the peasantry—an experience which was later to inspire the expression of feelings of undivided sympathy with the land and the people. His vivid imagination was stimulated during these early days by the many fairy-tales recounted by his nurse, and the songs heard among the peasantry made such an impression upon him that he tried to reproduce them on the piano long before he had any technical knowledge of the instrument. This evidence of a love for music pleased his parents and, soon after it was observed, his mother began to give him lessons on the piano. A German lady was later called in to undertake his elementary musical education, and little Modeste showed very soon a decided talent for the piano which in later years developed to the extent of earning for him quite a reputation. In his autobiography Moussorgsky records that at the age of seven he was already able to render the smaller pieces of Liszt, and two years later, he played a concerto by Field at a party given by his parents. His attention to music was not confined to the interpretative, for he often went to the piano and improvised musical settings for the fairy-tales heard from his beloved nurse.

His father, rejoicing at these manifestations of a truly musical nature, decided to provide a means of developing the boy's talent, and in 1849, when Modeste and his brother Philaret were taken to St. Petersburg,

an opportunity naturally presented itself. It must not be supposed, however, that the father had any idea that the boy would become a musician by vocation, for no such notion could have entered his head. Modeste was intended for the army, and on his arrival in St. Petersburg, was entered at the Military Cadets' School. His parents fully realised the importance of music in the scheme of education and engaged a well-known piano teacher, Herke, to assist the youth in his musical studies. Progress was rapid, and at twelve years of age he played at a private concert with such success that his teacher, a man of austere character, was overjoyed and presented him, as a tribute, with a copy of a Beethoven sonata. At this time Moussorgsky learned a good deal about the old Greek liturgical chants from a priest, Kroupskey by name, who was entrusted with his religious instruction. This knowledge, as we shall see, was to become exceedingly useful to him.

In 1852 he passed into the school for ensigns of the Guard. His music lessons were not interrupted by this change, and in the same year he again delighted Herke by composing an "Ensigns' Polka," which he dedicated to his schoolfellows. This little piece was published in deference to his master's wish.

The death of his father in 1853 does not seem to have brought about any alteration in the manner of Moussorgsky's life. He continued his military studies and his general education, became proficient in German and Latin and evinced a particular fondness for history and philosophical literature. He took weekly music lessons from Herke.

A youth of very amiable character, he formed a

good many friendships. One of his first companions was Asanchevsky, who was a year his senior. This choice is sufficiently significant, for Asanchevsky in later life became director of the St Petersburg Conservatorium.

After leaving the cadets' school and entering the Prébajensky regiment, to which he was gazetted in 1856, he met several young men of about his own age and tastes, and to one of these, Obolensky, he dedicated a "souvenir of childhood" for piano. This was never published. His varied accomplishments—for in addition to his pianistic talent and his awakening faculty of composition, he had a very pleasant baritone voice—soon secured for him a prominent position in musical society. That he had begun to take himself seriously is plain from the fact that during his first year of military service, he set to work upon an opera, the text of which, derived from Hugo's "*Han d'Islande*," he himself undertook. As he was barely seventeen years old, his failure to get beyond the libretto of this work could hardly have been regarded as significant of musical impotence.

In the autumn of 1856, Moussorgsky first met Borodin, who was five years older. Borodin had already begun some more or less serious musical studies, and, as will be remembered, he was just then somewhat sympathetically inclined towards the German musical style. Allusion has already been made to this auspicious meeting, but Borodin's account of the impression made upon him by his future colleague intensifies the interest of the occurrence in no small measure. Shortly after Moussorgsky's death, Borodin devoted some newspaper articles to the work of his

deceased friend and herein occurs the following description :

"I met Moussorgsky for the first time in the autumn of 1856 I had just been appointed army surgeon. Moussorgsky was an officer in the Préobajensky regiment He was then seventeen. Our meeting took place at the hospital in which we were both serving; we met in a common room, which we both found equally dull. Both of us felt the same need for expansion, and we were not long in fraternising. The same evening we had an invitation to the house of the principal medical officer. Monsieur Popoff had a marriageable daughter and frequently invited the doctors and officers on duty. Moussorgsky was what is popularly termed a smart officer, elegant in dress and in person; small feet, hair well trimmed, nails correct, aristocratic hands, distinguished in carriage and choice in conversation; he spoke with some affectation and sprinkled his discourse with French phrases a trifle pretentiously In all this there was a touch of fatuity, but it was very slight and was tempered by a really superior education. He was a favourite with the ladies, and would sit down to the piano and play with grace and expression fragments from the 'Trovatore' or 'Traviata,' enchanted to hear his feminine audience murmur his praises in chorus.

"I met Moussorgsky three or four times at Popoff's, and in the common room of the hospital. Then I lost sight of him. Popoff resigned and there were no more evening gatherings."

Their next meeting did not take place until three years later.

There is nothing in this narrative which would lead

anyone to suppose that Moussorgsky's subsequent musical, poetic and psychological development might at this time have been anticipated by any of his acquaintances. Nevertheless, the evidence of Stasoff shows that his emancipation had already begun and that he was beginning to recognise the purposelessness of much Italian music. This, in view of Borodin's impression, is a somewhat necessary explanation of his readiness to listen when, in the following winter his acquaintance with Dargomijsky gave him an opportunity of hearing the views of that composer. As their friendship ripened, Moussorgsky's sympathy with the ideals of Dargomijsky underwent a marked expansion and the seed of the life-work of the composer of "Boris Godounoff" may be said to have been sown when Dargomijsky's dual desire for legitimacy in the relation of song to speech and for a general sincerity in the realm of musical creation was first communicated to him.

Prior to these musical confabulations, Moussorgsky's knowledge of native works had been of the slightest, but when, towards the end of 1857, his meeting with Cui led to an acquaintanceship both with Balakireff and Stasoff, he began to take the liveliest interest in the musical products of his country, and soon perceived that the incipient socialistic tendency of which he had lately become conscious could be provided with a medium of expression in a novel and freer form of music. An examination of the works of Glinka strengthened his determination to endow his art with a truly national basis, while those of Dargomijsky led him to see that the conventional musical patterns were negligible and could be discarded by a

composer in whom conviction and inspiration were strong and constant. Under the guidance of Balakireff, who had assumed an unofficial directorship in relation to the little coterie, he made an analytical survey of the best works of the classical and romantic composers, playing them over by means of four-handed arrangements and gaining from Balakireff's comments an intelligent insight into their qualities of form and style.

This examination of masterpieces kindled Moussorgsky's lambent creative flame and he composed a symphonic first movement (of which the manuscript was lost) an orchestral Scherzo in B minor which came to be considered worthy of performance in 1860 at the Russian Musical Society's concert, when it was conducted by Rubinstein, another Scherzo in C sharp, a setting of Sophocles's "Œdipus Rex," of which one of the choruses was given in 1861 under the direction of Constantine Liadoff (the father of Anatole Liadoff) and some songs which were never published.

Moussorgsky's character had not at this date undergone that radical metastasis by which it was eventually transformed. At some of the informal musical parties given by Cui he appears to have been in cheerful enough a mood, exercising a talent as comedian, reciting humorous pieces by standard authors, and in one notable instance using his baritone voice in the interpretation of the principal rôle in Cui's comic opera, "The Mandarin's Son," which was being given a private hearing.

About this time Moussorgsky began to grudge the time spent on his military duties. He had no great taste for them and he had already a half-formed inten-

tion of resigning his commission. It so happened that in 1859 he found himself transferred to a garrison outside, though not far from St. Petersburg. He foresaw that the frequent meetings with his mother to whom he was very much attached, his family and his friends, would no longer be possible, and that his musical studies would be seriously menaced. Moussorgsky decided therefore to leave the army. His friends, fully alive to the importance of a staple occupation, tried their hardest to induce him to stick to soldiering, even if only as a source of income, but without avail.

In the summer following his resignation, he was unable, however, to do any work, being overtaken by a serious affection of the nerves which entailed undergoing a cure. This was happily effective and in the autumn he was able to apply himself to music, undisturbed by other considerations. He composed a little scherzo for piano, published some years later, and an "Impromptu" inspired by a popular "sex-problem" novel of the period.

There is a hint in the description given of Moussorgsky by Borodin, who then met him for the second time, that the degeneration which later was to become so marked had already set in. "I met him once more," wrote Borodin, "at the house of one of the assistant professors of the academy, M. Ivanovsky, doctor to the School of Artillery. Moussorgsky had then left the army.

"He was no longer the handsome youth that I had known at Popoff's; he had grown stout and lost his fine bearing, but he was as careful as ever of his personal appearance. His habits were just the same and



his foppishness had grown if anything a degree more marked. On being introduced we had no difficulty in recognising each other.

"Moussorgsky assured me that he had only resigned in order to devote himself to music. It was our chief topic of conversation. I was at that time enthusiastic over Mendelssohn; Schumann was unknown to me. Moussorgsky was already a frequent visitor to Balakireff's, and his head was filled with a number of new works of which I had no idea.

"Ivanovsky asked us to play Mendelssohn's A minor Symphony as a duet. Moussorgsky at first made some objections and begged to be excused the andante, which, he said, was not symphonic, and rather resembled one of the 'Songs without Words' orchestrated. He played the first movement and the scherzo. Moussorgsky afterwards began to speak with enthusiasm of Schumann's symphonies. He played fragments of the one in E flat major. Suddenly he broke off, saying: 'Now for the mathematic!'

"All this was quite new to me and captivated me from the first. Seeing that it took my fancy, he played other new works, and I soon learned that he was a composer himself, which increased the interest his personality had awakened in me. He then played a scherzo of his own, and on reaching the trio, he whispered to me: 'This is quite oriental!' I was astonished at these musical forms which were quite novel to me. I cannot say they pleased me at first. I was bewildered, but by dint of listening I soon began to appreciate them and find in them a certain charm. I must confess that when Moussorgsky had told me of his intention to devote himself seriously to

music I took this declaration at first for a bit of braggadocio, and laughed in my sleeve. But after hearing his scherzo, I asked myself: 'Can I believe it, or not?'

From this time on, Moussorgsky, having sacrificed the emolument derived from his commission, was never free from financial embarrassments, and to add to his troubles his family was broken up by dissension—his brother married, and his mother withdrew to her country property. Moussorgsky divided his time between town and country and seems to have been unable to settle down for any prolonged period. His intentions in respect of an assiduous devotion to composition were not being realised, and the works which date from this period are few, and to judge from the surviving example, "King Saul" (to an original text founded on Byron) poor in quality.

Moussorgsky's early instrumental compositions do not foreshadow the marked individuality of expression which is the outstanding feature of his later works. It was not until he renewed the acquaintance, formed in childhood, with the peasantry, that he began to evolve a mode of expression quite peculiar to himself. In a letter written to Cui in 1863 he mentions that residence in the country is beginning to take effect upon his artistic sensibilities. Arrived at manhood, he was beginning to acquire a perception of true values and his knowledge of the peasants' nature drove him to the conclusion that the voice of the people alone could be reckoned upon for a faithful artistic expression of nationality.

This realised, he finally turned his back on all the conventions of the social system and determined on

living a life which was in accord with the actually prevailing social conditions. Of the somewhat foppish and affected guardsman there soon remained no semblance.

On returning to St. Petersburg Moussorgsky joined with five friends in forming an intellectual coterie. Each of them had a separate room and the evenings were spent in discussing matters of artistic moment and of social importance. Moussorgsky began just now to feel the pinch of poverty and in order to earn a little more he was obliged to undertake translation work. Later he took a minor post in a governmental department.

During his sojourn in this combined household, he began to occupy himself with a work which, although it was not destined to be completed, became the source of several numbers subsequently embodied in the creations of his maturity. In 1863 he decided to begin an opera upon the subject of Flaubert's "Salammbô," with an original libretto. Here already he began to adopt the plan of attaching a supreme importance to the People in his dramatic scheme, and the scenes in which the principal characters appeared were of a nature rendering them less likely to be invested with the usual paramount interest. In the construction of "Salammbô" there was also evidence of a preoccupation with the niceties of scenic legitimacy. He was particularly scrupulous in his endeavours faithfully to reproduce the characteristics of scenery and costume to be found in Flaubert's work. After a good deal of work upon "Salammbô," of which he completed one scene of the second act and one of both the third and fourth acts, Moussorgsky

put the work to one side and not until a long time after did he return to it for the purpose of drawing therefrom various numbers, which were transposed for use in his later and better known works.

Soon after, in 1864, Moussorgsky turned his attention to the voice. First came "Night," already foreshadowing the later harmonic freedom. This was followed by "Kallistrate," to words of Nekrassoff, a song in which he fully reveals his sympathy with the soil.

In the following year the death of his mother stirred up strong memories of his childhood and he then wrote a song which has come to be regarded as one of his finest and most characteristic works of this class. The "Peasant's Cradle-song" is set to a text taken from Ostrovsky's drama, "Voyevode." Its music follows with extraordinary fidelity the sentiment of the words which voice the complaint of the peasantry against the conditions of their labour. He also composed about this time two small "Reminiscences of Childhood" for the piano, the first, "Nurse and I," the second, "Nurse shuts me up in a Dark Cupboard," both of which, like the "Peasant's Cradle-song," were dedicated to his dead mother. Although these were never published, they are worthy of mention as attempts to realise the occurrences of life in art music.

Moussorgsky was now in constant association with his colleagues of the "band," but although he was receiving a sort of instruction from Balakireff, it was rather toward Dargomijsky that he turned for a model and it was Moussorgsky alone who accepted in their entirety the precepts of the composer of "The Stone Guest."

Towards the middle of 1865 Moussorgsky was once more attacked by the nervous affection from which he had suffered a few years earlier. He was obliged to relinquish his post and to leave his friends. At his brother's suggestion he went again to live in the country where his health soon took a turn for the better.

An episode which occurred during this period of rustication inspired one of Moussorgsky's most remarkable essays in realism. Through his open window he overheard, one day, the piteous accents of a half-witted villager who was addressing himself vehemently in amorous supplication to the village beauty. Moussorgsky, deeply impressed with the pathos of this little scene, embodied it in a song reproducing its tragedy with a realism which serves to place "Savichna" in a category of its own in the sphere of vocal music.

The year 1866 was comparatively uneventful. Moussorgsky spent part of his time at Minkino, his brother's home, but his friendship with Rimsky-Korsakoff, which was to become so firm, was cemented at this time by a frequent exchange of musical ideas, each in turn seating himself at the piano whilst the other listened. Moussorgsky was trying to improve his orchestral technique and by the end of the year he had completed the greater part of a work for chorus and orchestra, "The Destruction of Sennacherib," which was produced in the following year by Balakireff at a free school concert. The result of his efforts towards improvement seems to have satisfied him. In 1867, in addition to the orchestration of an Intermezzo, written six years earlier for the piano and dedicated to Borodin, he wrote one of his most popular works,

"Night on the Bare Mountain," for orchestra. This work is not exactly to be regarded as belonging to this period because its musical elements are largely derived from the last scene of the third act of the abandoned "Salammbô." It was, moreover, several times revised and later employed in a dramatic work, of which more hereafter.

"Night on the Bare Mountain" has a definite "programme" which appears in its score. It describes the unholy revels of a witches' sabbath on a mountain range in the province of Kief. The spirits of darkness are joined in their festivities by Tchernobog. At a moment when the orgies are at their height the distant sound of a village church bell is heard and at this hint of dawn the spirits disperse. A characteristic device is herein employed. Moussorgsky supplements the stroke on the gong with overtones played by wind instruments. This is to be noted in other of the composer's uses of the bell.

During the years 1866 and 1867 Moussorgsky wrote some songs which later attracted a good deal of attention on their own account, apart, that is to say, from public interest in the composer's personality: "The Seminarist," a song which enters the region of satire with its portrayal of the amorous preoccupations of a theological student, was banned by the censor and was published in consequence at Leipzig; "The Classicist," a satirical portrait of Famynstsin, a contemporary reactionary critic; "Near the Don," to the text of Koltsoff, a charming picture of a day-dreaming village girl; "The Magpie" (Pushkin), a highly imaginative little work; "The Ragamuffin," in which the "cheek" of a guttersnipe deriding the person of an old woman,

is wonderfully suggested by means of rhythmic figures, as also the well-merited drubbing he receives at her hands, and the "Hopak," derived from Meyer's adaptation of the words of Chevchenko (a prophet of the emancipation of serfs) an alternating and semi-savage recital of the sentiments of love and hate.

Most of the year 1868 was spent in the country in circumstances which appear to have tended to excite the composer's creative faculty, for this period was a particularly fruitful one. Encouraged by suggestions from Dargomijsky and Cui, that he should undertake an opera, and impressed by Gogol's comedy, "Marriage," he resolved to set the play, exactly as it stood to music, without the customary adaptation. This proceeding was the more daring because Gogol's comedy is written in prose. Only one act of "Marriage" was completed, although some further sketches were made but it is clear from his letters that Moussorgsky considered this work as representing himself at his best and from the details of its form and content given by M. Calvocoressi in his comprehensive monograph it is not difficult to perceive that "Marriage" came nearest of all the dramatic works of the "five," to the ideal of Dargomijsky. One characteristic of "Marriage" which causes it to stand out is that it was a representation of contemporary life; this was the first instance of the adoption by any composer of a subject dealing with the manners and customs of his own day—a plan which has since commended itself to but few, although the examples provided by Charpentier and Puccini have given proof enough that the proceeding is not altogether incompatible with musico-dramatic success.

The humour of Gogol's comedy was faithfully re-

produced in the music. There were but four characters in the piece: Podkolessin, a booby anxious to contract a matrimonial alliance; his servant, Stepan, who lives in a perpetual state of exasperation at the stupidity of his master; Thecla, a bland and loquacious matchmaker; and Kotchkareff, a wiseacre. In devising the musical characterisation of these protagonists, Moussorgsky resolved to make use of every conceivable means of transposing them from their original sphere of comedy proper to that of comic music-drama without loss of atmosphere, and in the execution of this plan he availed himself of such expedients as a melodic imitation of the spoken word and an incessant change of rhythm, by which latter he hoped to effect a musical reproduction of the exquisite humour of the dialogue in the spoken version. Nowhere, it seems, was the task beyond him.

Moussorgsky returned to St. Petersburg in the autumn and this completed first act of "Marriage" was performed at some of the meetings of his little circle, quite informally, of course. The composer played the part of the would-be Benedict, and Dargomijsky undertook Kotchkareff. At the piano was the lady who became the wife of Rimsky-Korsakoff.

Moussorgsky found time during 1868, apart from his work on "Marriage," to compose some of his most notable songs. "The Orphan" is a wonderful reflection of the monotonous chant of a street beggar. The text, from the composer's own pen, is so faithfully served that its musical setting is in reality nothing more than a medium for enhancing the emotional significance of the words and makes no appeal on its own account, when separated, that is to say, from the



text. Its conclusion—the despair of the orphan, left standing by the passer-by to whom he has been addressing his plaintive recital—is of a poignancy which is intensified by the composer's novel and entirely convincing treatment. For "Eremouchka's Cradle-song," his next, he again wrote the words. To the encouragement of Dargomijsky, who recognised the amazing truthfulness of Moussorgsky's picture of child-life in the song called "Nurse, tell me a Tale," written at this time and dedicated to the composer of "The Stone-Guest," is owed that remarkable series, "The Nursery," of which there will be occasion to speak further on. "A Child's Song" (Мѣсяцъ) was published separately in 1871.

## V.

### "BORIS GODOUNOFF."

IN the autumn of 1868, on his return from Minkino, Moussorgsky established himself in the house of a musical family called Opochinin, friends of Dargomijsky. He lived with them for two years. He was now dependent on a minor post in the Ministry of the Interior, an occupation leaving him a fair amount of leisure, and he found himself in circumstances which were very favourable to the elaboration of his creative designs. He was once more in the regular enjoyment of the society of his friends and came again into touch with Nikolsky, whom he had met some time before at the house of Mme Chestakoff, the sister of Glinka. It was Nikolsky's idea of seeking in Pushkin's "Boris Godounoff" the basis of a national music-drama which so fascinated Moussorgsky that he resolved there and then to shelve "Marriage," and applied himself in September to the new work. After two months of feverish activity, he finished the first act, and the whole of the first version of "Boris Godounoff" was completed in a year. The orchestration was carried out in the winter of 1869-70. Before

his death in 1869, Dargomijsky heard the first act and a further scene at one of the occasional informal meetings of the circle. In these fragmentary performances Moussorgsky himself rendered the vocal parts, and Alexandra Pourgold, the future sister-in-law of Rimsky-Korsakoff, reproduced the orchestral matter at the piano. Dargomijsky, it is said, at once realised that on the shoulders of Moussorgsky his own mantle would fall.

The shape in which "Boris Godounoff" is now known differs substantially from this early version. Moussorgsky's friends were the first to point out certain weaknesses, one of them being an absence of feminine interest. The composer was not at all inclined to admit the justice of their criticisms until, in the autumn of 1870, the work was refused by the directorate of the Opera, and Moussorgsky then set himself to revise and to make certain additions to the work; a labour which occupied him for the whole of 1871.

Moussorgsky had now left the Opochinins and was sharing quarters with Rimsky-Korsakoff—also busy composing.

"Boris Godounoff" was again submitted to the judgment of friends in the following winter, the performances being of the same private nature as before. Not long after, in February, 1873, a public representation of certain portions was given at the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, on the occasion of the benefit of Kondratieff, who was officially connected with the house. These fragments were received with warm approval, and a few months later the whole work was put into rehearsal.

"Boris Godounoff" was produced on January 24, 1874. Certain versions of its story have been used by various dramatists, including Schiller, but that of Pushkin is the best known and it is from the latter source that Moussorgsky derived the "book" of his national music-drama, making certain additions from the chronicles of the great historian, Karamzin, which had already been carefully studied by Pushkin himself before designing his famous poem.

The substance of the story is founded on one of the most remarkable series of events in the history of the Russian empire. The diabolical behaviour of Ivan the Terrible had resulted in a thorough subjection of all classes in Russia and a consequent weakening of character in his subjects. There was one, however, whose spirit had not been cowed. This was Boris Godounoff, who was not only attached to Ivan's court, but was connected with the royal circle by other ties; he himself married a member of the Czar's entourage, and his sister became the wife of Feodor, Ivan's son. Feodor was the rightful heir to Ivan, but as he was feeble-minded, and as his half-brother, Dmitri, was but an infant, Godounoff was made regent. When it became certain that the half-witted Feodor could never be counted upon to govern, the fitness of Boris Godounoff as occupant of the throne was discussed.

It is supposed that Godounoff, who was exceedingly ambitious, became obsessed by his desire for supreme power and that this was what drove him to secure the removal of the little Dmitri. The child was found murdered in the church at Ouglich in 1581. It does not seem to have been certain that Godounoff actually

instigated the crime, but this has been assumed by the dramatist and laid largely under contribution for the psychological material it affords. He was invited to ascend the throne and after a period of doubt, the genuineness of which has been questioned, he acceded to the request of the people. Boris's reign was that of a reformer, but it was clouded by his own remorse for the act which secured him the throne and by the periodic appearances of pretenders, one of whom obtained a considerable measure of support from the Poles, who were always alive to the advantage of creating a disturbance in Russia. The appearance of this impostor is supposed to have intensified Godounoff's remorse and to have driven him to the madness which ended in his death. For those interested primarily in the opera, discussion as to the truth of the story is negligible; it suffices to note that the murder at Ouglich is an essential in the dramatic substance, both of Pushkin and Moussorgsky.

Moussorgsky did not, however, make Godounoff the sole point of interest. From the earliest moment in the prologue the People, their sentiments and their actions are brought well to the fore. Even without a knowledge of Moussorgsky's sympathies, it would not require much penetration to perceive that the hero of "Boris Godounoff" is the Russian nation and the ostensible protagonists are in reality nothing but objects on which the light of nationalism may shine.

"Boris Godounoff" is entitled "National Music-Drama in four acts with a Prologue."\* The first

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\* For the sake of convenience the order of narration is that of Rimsky-Korsakoff's 1908 edition.

scene of the prologue shows the populace in the courtyard of the Monastery of Novodievich. They are calling upon the Deity to persuade the unwilling Godounoff to assume the monarchy. Some of the crowd are not particularly fervent in their implorations for the reason that they have but an imperfect idea as to their requirements. In order to secure a semblance of zeal the nobles have commissioned some policemen to use force, and the peasants are driven to express themselves with greater vehemence by threats of violent chastisement at the hands of the police. The secretary of the Douma, Stchelakoff, enters and brings intelligence of the diffidence of Boris, who has been living in retirement in the monastery since the assassination of Dmitri. This "backwardness in coming forward" is attributed by Pushkin to the guile of Godounoff, who wished to make quite sure of the cordiality of his prospective subjects. They renew their entreaties, and in the second scene, which is pitched in the Red Square in front of the Kremlin Godounoff has been won over and is seen passing through the cheering crowd on the way to his coronation. Here the prologue terminates. The text of these two scenes is the work of Moussorgsky.

The first scene of the initial act, which is taken practically intact from Pushkin, is laid in a cell of the Monastery of the Miracle. Pimen, an old monk, is discovered putting the finishing touches to his chronicle of the history of Russia, one of its concluding incidents being the murder of Dmitri. Near him lies a young novice, Grigory Otrèpieff. The latter awakes from a terrifying dream and questions Pimen as to the circumstances of the murder of the Czarevich

Grigory, learning that Dmitri was the same age as himself, falls a prey to an exaltation of mind, to which his own ambition is to some extent contributory, and persuades himself that he is to be the agent of his Maker in bringing about the exposure and punishment of the newly appointed Czar.

The second scene of this act brings us to the Lithuanian frontier, and represents the interior of a country inn. After a song by the hostess, in which number the vein of the "Hopak" is recalled, there arrive two vagabond friars, Varlaam and Missail, accompanied by the young novice, Grigory, who has escaped from the monastery and has assumed a disguise under which he hopes to gain the frontier. After some passages between the lively friars and their taciturn companion, whom they taunt on his refusing to join in their carousal, a peremptory knock is heard and the police enter to prosecute their search for the missing novice. They produce a warrant and hand it to Varlaam, whom they already suspect. Varlaam, a little overcome by liquid refreshment, is at first apathetic, but when Grigory reads from the document a fictitious description of Varlaam, which he substitutes for that of himself, the friar seizes the warrant and interprets it faithfully. Grigory is at once recognised from the verbal portrait, but, before the astonished police can act, he draws his knife and escapes through the window. The songs of the hostess and Varlaam are based on folk-material.

The second act takes place in the private apartments of the Imperial Palace. Xenia, the Czar's daughter,

is lamenting the death of her betrothed,\* Boris's young son, Feodor, is examining the works of a clock. Their nurse endeavours to console the mourning Xenia, and proposes a "singing game" in which she takes so lively a part that she fails to notice the entrance of her imperial master. Boris is, however, in a sympathetic mood. The nurse and Xenia withdraw and the father notices that Feodor is engrossed in the study of a map of Russia. He prophesies that his son will one day rule over the land. Just then a disturbance is heard outside, and during Feodor's absence in search of its cause, Prince Shouisky arrives with the news of the appearance on the frontier of a pretender who claims to be the murdered Dmitri. Before Shouisky can be admitted, Feodor returns and explains that the noise was caused by the excitement of the servants at the escape of a parrakeet belonging to the palace.† Feodor then retires and Shouisky enters and gives an account of the Polish rising, at the head of which is the pretender. Boris conjures Shouisky to swear that the victim of the murder at Ouglich was really the child Dmitri, and Shouisky's reply takes the form of a description of the actual crime, which is so realistic that Boris, after dismissing him, has a fit of the horrors; he is the victim of a hallucination and imagines

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\* This probably refers to the marriage which had been arranged with John of Denmark, the brother of James the First's consort, one of the schemes attributed to the worldly ambition of Godounoff. John's premature death upset this plan.

† Karamzin records that the first bird of this species introduced into Russia was presented to the Czar Boris, and it is thought that Moussorgsky refers to this in order to heighten the historical interest of the opera.



himself confronted by the bloody corpse of the murdered prince. The curtain falls. Here again Pushkin's text remains virtually unaltered, but for the episodic details introduced by the nurse and the incident of the parrakeet.

The text of the third act belongs entirely to Mousorgsky and serves to introduce the Polish insurrectionary element and also the love interest of the drama. The first scene takes place in the apartments of Marina Mnichuk, a Polish princess, whose father is holding a festival at his castle of Sandomir. The princess has been persuaded by her Jesuit advisers to receive Grigory with hospitality for the purpose of using him as an instrument whereby the Russian throne may be assailed. Grigory has conceived a passion for Marina and is thus an easy tool. Marina, who is making her toilet, is interrupted by a Jesuit priest Rangoni. The priest calls upon her to exert every possible influence over the false Dmitri, so that through him the conversion of the Muscovites to the one true faith may be achieved. Marina, at first horrified by the lengths to which Rangoni proposes she should go in order to encompass the enslavement of her lover, refuses, but being threatened by the Jesuit with the Divine displeasure, she capitulates.

The next scene discovers Grigory awaiting the fulfilment of Marina's assignation with him in the castle gardens. The agreed trysting place is near a fountain. Grigory's soliloquies are cut short by Rangoni who assures the pretender that he is the object of Marina's tender passion. Once more alone, Grigory overhears the plot of the Poles whose designs against his country are not by any means in accord with his

own ambitions. But when Marina arrives, she manages by feminine wiles to overcome his fears, and they plight their troth—to the intense satisfaction of the spying Rangoni.

The fourth and last act is divided into two scenes. The first shows the highway to Moscow, near the forest of Kromy. The pretender is passing through the forest with his troops, bent on the capture of Moscow. The country is in revolt, and the peasants are seen baiting an old noble. A group of youngsters are tormenting a poor half-witted lad. The two friars, Varlaam and Missail, have attached themselves to the pretender's forces and are doing their drunken best to arouse popular feeling in support of the new Czar. After a bout between the crowd and two Jesuit priests, who narrowly escape hanging at the hands of the peasants, the usurper arrives and calls upon the people to follow him to the Kremlin. The people, who are represented as having no minds of their own, rush after the pretender in an access of crazy enthusiasm for the latest revolutionary notion, and the sole remaining occupant of the stage, the poor idiot boy, sobs a lament for his country and its folk.

The second and final scene brings us back to Moscow. It takes place in the hall of the Douma, where a special sitting of the nobles is being held for the purpose of discussing a proper punishment of the usurper. Shouisky brings word that the Czar is suffering fearful mental torture from the hallucinations engendered by the recollection of the unforgettable crime. Shouisky is still enlarging on the ruler's state of mind when Boris rushes in in a paroxysm of fear. He is supposed to have emerged from his encounter

with the apparition of the real Dmitri, which took place in the second act.

In the presence of his nobles Boris becomes a little calmer, and Shouisky announces that an old monk is awaiting an audience. Pimen appears and relates a story he has heard from an old shepherd. The shepherd, who had been blind since childhood, had heard in his dreams a voice which commanded him to go to the tomb of Dmitri and there to pray. He obeyed the voice, which was that of the dead Czarevich, and his sight was restored to him. The nobles, hearing this recital, look upon it as convincing proof of the falsity of the pretender's claim, but Boris, instead of evincing the satisfaction they expect, is so consumed with remorse at this final and conclusive evidence that the crime instigated by him was really committed, that he collapses and succumbs, after commending his young son to the nobles.

In these two scenes which are pregnant with a frightful realism, Moussorgsky is responsible for the text. Only the episode of the idiot and the recital of Pimen belong to the original.

For various reasons "Boris Godounoff," as it is now performed, is not to be considered as a completely spontaneous product. In the first place, the difference between the first version with its lack of feminine interest, and the second, is by no means slight.

Acting on the advice of Stassoff and of Hartmann, an architect, Moussorgsky made a very considerable addition to the existing substance of the work. The opening portion of the inn scene, containing the hostess's song, the chiming clock and parrakeet incidents, as well as the children's diversions in the scene of

he royal apartments, and the whole of the Polish scene, were all included at the instance of his friends. The scene in the cell was enlarged and the choral fragments were brought in. Then, persuaded by his friend Nikolsky, the composer altered the order of the last two scenes so that the drama finished, not with the death of Boris, but with the reappearance of Grigory as pretender, the revolt of the people, and finally the plaint of the idiot.

Fifteen years after Moussorgsky's death, Rimsky-Korsakoff undertook a "revision" of the opera, in which he seems not only to have toned down a good many musical features which would have won acceptance to-day as having been extraordinarily prophetic, but to have cut out a good deal of the supplementary numbers in Moussorgsky's second version. Two years later these were replaced by the reviser in his edition of 1908, but a further and quite radical change has since been made by the producers, and in the version given in Paris and London, in 1913, the whole of the Polish act had disappeared, as also the episode of the parrakeet, and several minor excisions were made.

It has further to be remembered that a good deal of the music of "Boris Godounoff" was not composed expressly for that drama, but originated in the forsaken "Salammbô" (1866), a work of a different order.

The music of Boris's death scene, the love scene between Dmitri and Marina, Boris's aria in the second act, the hustling of the two Jesuit priests, as well as the people's welcome to the pretender in the first scene of the fourth act, and some of the Douma scene, were all originally composed for "Salamambo" and were grafted on to "Boris Godounoff" after undergoing

the process of modification and improvement dictated both by Moussorgsky's ripened powers and the exigencies of transplantation.

As usually performed, "Boris Godounoff" gives the impression of being a series of historical illustrations rather than a music-drama, and at first acquaintance with the work, the absence of overture, entr'actes, of everything of the kind but a brief introduction which reunites the temporarily interrupted vocal line, heightens such impression. There is, however, a strong link between the various sections, a musical thread which serves effectively to connect the whole. One feels that Moussorgsky's desire for dramatic legitimacy has much in common with that of the modern British dramatist, and the elimination of the factitious from "Boris Godounoff" is certainly an early step in the direction taken by Bernard Shaw when, in "Getting Married," he rings down the curtain on a handshake, but on lifting it again shows the greeting still in progress, thus making an interval to meet the demands of the audience without disturbing the progress of dramatic events.

Although there is nothing in the symphonic developments in "Boris Godounoff" which approaches the complexities of Wagnerian music-drama, the leading motives are quite definitely associated with the characters and emotions of the drama. The music which accompanies reference to the false Dmitri comes frequently to the fore after its first appearance in Pimen's cell, and in the mazurka theme of Marina's aria, one of the weakest numbers of the whole opera, Moussorgsky risks exposure of its poor quality by an excessive allusion to its melody and rhythm in the Polish ac

(Act III). Noteworthy features in the realm of musical suggestion are those of the music accompanying the hallucinations of Boris, where Moussorgsky forsakes the conventional custom of employing the heavy brass and reproduces the frenzy in musical terms by means of a downward chromatic passage played *tremolo* by strings—an effect which succeeds because it has a far more direct appeal to the nerves of the listener than the more abstract commentary of the German operatic masters, past and present; again when Boris makes his imperialistic reference to his son's map, a few simple but majestic chords serve admirably to convey a sentiment of ambitious monarchism. Many moments in "Boris Godounoff" testify to the capacity of its composer for realistic musical reproduction of the thing acted. The undulating line which accompanies the writing of the venerable scribe, Pimen, the musical devices which assist in the suggestion of the vinous obfuscation of the bibulous Varlaam, the addition of harmonics to the bell tones by means of auxiliary notes given to wind instruments, the use of ancient liturgical modes in connection with the Pimen interest, for the knowledge of which Moussorgsky was indebted to his earlier researches under Kroupsky's guidance, the highly suggestive pathos of the music in the episode of the tormented idiot—a reminiscence of "Savichna" and the uncompromising truthfulness of the innkeeper's song.

From the dramatic view point there are certain lapses from legitimacy. In the monastic cell scene, for instance, it is not until the awakened Grigory has been singing at the top of his voice for some considerable time that Pimen notices—apparently for the

first time—that the novice is no longer slumbering. Again, the appearance of Shouisky at the very moment when his absence from the Douma meeting is first noticed, is a blemish which might easily have been avoided. Such defects as these, no doubt, would have passed unnoticed on any stage in the early seventies but they are sufficiently remarkable when associated with the work of a man whose reformatory efforts were directed precisely at such inconsistencies. That he was not blind to niceties of the kind is manifest from his recognition of the dramatic force and appropriateness of Boris's entrance to the Douma meeting, immediately after Shouisky's report on his state of mind, ejaculating the very word "avaunt" which has just fallen from Shouisky's lips.

A considerable stress has been laid upon Moussorgsky's employment of folk-tunes. It seems a little unsafe to attribute any deliberacy to the composer in this matter, apart, that is, from the use of the complete popular folk-melodies such as those in the scene with the nurse, for in spite of certain definite allusions like that of the "Russian theme" of Beethoven's Quartet, Op. 59, occurring in the coronation scene, there is every reason to believe that Moussorgsky had so steeped himself in folk-music, both during childhood and in his frequent visits to the country, that he hardly knew himself what was original and what was not. In passing, it may here be suggested that this is a very desirable consummation of the nationalistic proposition, one which finds a parallel in the work of other composers with a purpose such as Sibelius and Grieg. Other Russian composers have made copious references to the treasury of native folk-song, but none

have invested their quotations with the quality or appearance of spontaneity which is an essential condition of the artistic fitness of such a proceeding.

"Artistic fitness" is the expression which best sums up the work of Moussorgsky in "Boris Godounoff," and lest the full measure of its importance should escape the notice of those who peruse that remarkable score for the first time in the twentieth century, a reference to the musico-dramatic works, accessible in the late sixties and early seventies of the nineteenth, should provide sufficient contrast to testify to the amazing genius and prophetic insight of the master who created it.

At its production "Boris Godounoff" was accorded a reception of a kind now commonly associated with works that break new ground. For the sake of convenience such audiences may be roughly divided under the two heads of "young-minded" and "old-minded," irrespective of the age of individual components. The young-minded section of the St. Petersburg musical public, in 1874, understood the purport of Moussorgsky's innovations and recognised their profound significance. The old-minded hurled every kind of critical missile at the composer, accusing him of technical ignorance, vulgarity, want of taste, and exposed their own perversity by asserting that the only successful numbers were those which were in the accepted operatic style. The opera was given twenty successive performances and was greeted on the one hand with tremendous enthusiasm and on the other with furious indignation. Admirers of the work left the theatre singing its popular choruses and paraded the streets in choral parties. Four wreaths, appropriately in-



scribed, were brought to the theatre on one of the evenings, but through the machinations of the infuriated opposition their presentation, intended to take place during the performance, was obstructed, and they had to be sent to Moussorgsky's private dwelling. After these initial performances, "Boris Godounoff" was taken off and made but infrequent appearances. It was mounted at Moscow in 1889, but was not again placed in the regular repertory at St. Petersburg until after its revision, in 1896, by Rimsky-Korsakoff.

During his preparation of the opera which is usually considered as his masterpiece, Moussorgsky found time for the composition of several other works of note. In 1870 he wrote "The Peep Show," a song of the same order as the "Classic," but on broader lines. In "The Peep Show" he did not confine himself, as before, to the lampooning of one critic but committed himself to a characteristic reproduction of the particular musical foible of each of the "old-minded." This song or "humorous scena" was suggested to Moussorgsky by Stasoff. It invites inspection of a series of puppets in a showman's booth. The first is Zarembo, then director of the St. Petersburg Conservatorium, "pietist and arch-classic," whose fidelity to Handel offered an easy vehicle for musical caricature. The second is Theophile Tolstoi, whose attention to the musical art was seemingly limited to an undying and oft-expressed admiration of Patti. Next comes Famyntsin of the "Classic," here introduced by a reference to one of his own ephemeral compositions. The last is Seroff, whose critical extravagances have already been referred to in these pages; the redoubtable Wagnerian is represented by a theme from "Rogneda." The critical atti-

tude towards "Boris Godounoff" is now partly accounted for! The identity of the victims is even more clearly revealed than that of the dramatic critics in the prologue to "Fanny's First Play," and this salutary exposure of their prejudices was hardly calculated to evoke an unbiassed estimate of the genius of the satirist or its product. The music of "The Peep Show" is, of course, less representative of the composer than the use to which it was put. That the scena was for a long time one of the few specimens of Moussorgsky's output at all familiar to English audiences, is one of those curious misdemeanours of circumstance which are now and again responsible for much misunderstanding.

A "Child's Song," dating from 1868, has been mentioned. Dargomijsky, impressed with the value of this, had given a great deal of encouragement to Moussorgsky to make further essays of the kind, with the result that the latter wrote four more, to which another two were afterwards added. These little sketches of child-life, known as "The Nursery," contain the quintessence of Moussorgsky's artistic and human qualities. Each of these little scenes is a self-contained comedy of nursery life—a comedy, be it understood, from which pathos is not long absent. Moussorgsky makes it quite plain that he really understood children and no less that he loved them. By means of the most ingenious rhythmic and melodic devices, he has contrived to paint these musical pictures with such extraordinary realism that almost every gesture of the child is portrayed therein and every shade of meaning in the words is faithfully interpreted by the music. There is not the slightest regard for the formulas of

conventional song-writing, and much of the music, if separated from the text, would be meaningless. Nothing more need be claimed than that in the whole domain of child-art these songs would hardly find a parallel in significance and power.

The first, "Nurse, tell me a Tale," pictures a child's demand for a story "about the bogey man who gobbles up little children," or about the club-footed prince whose every step causes a mushroom to come up out of the ground, or of the princess who sneezes so violently that she breaks the windows. The rhythmic pattern of this song is changed at every turn in the story, and it has gained a sort of notoriety for its twenty-seven variations of tune-signature.

The second, "Go in the corner," describes the nurse's return after a brief absence, to find the nursery strewn with a fearful mess of cotton, wrecked stitching, and all the contents of the nursery work-basket, to which a bottle of ink has contributed even greater devastation. Michenka is blamed and sentenced, and after his already grave offence has been further aggravated by rudeness, Moussorgsky tactfully draws a veil. . . .

The third tells of a breath-taking encounter with a bold cockchafer which intrudes upon the child's building operations in the garden. Michenka hits out blindly and is quite mystified at the passivity of the enemy, lying on his back, his legs trembling in a final and ineffective protest against a premature end.

The fourth is a charming cradle song to a sleeping doll which is beseeched to remember its dreams so that they may live waking hours.

"The Child's Prayer," which follows, probably brings us nearer to the real Moussorgsky than any

other of the gems of his legacy to us. The child prays on behalf of a whole string of people and forgets "what comes next" at the moment for craving God's indulgence for her own little sins. Nurse, who cannot remember *how* many times she has had to tell her, supplies the elusive phrase.

The sixth is another nerve-shattering occurrence which recalls the slaughter of the cockchafer. The old cat is discovered in a murderous attack upon the robin's cage. Michenka watches his chance and—bang! Complete rout of the cat, and a tingling hand the only damage.

The seventh and last scene, "The Hobby Horse," shows the child astride a stick, "transforming his nursery into a veritable battle-field, assaulting defenceless chairs and inflicting upon them, here a broken leg, there an arm."\* The intrepid warrior does not emerge unscathed from the conflict, and one of the most beautiful and effective modulations in the tonality and text alike is wrought in illustration of the parental endeavour to distract the child's attention from the damage caused by a fall sustained whilst at full gallop. This passage recalls the music of another between Boris Godounoff and his son.

Appreciation of what Moussorgsky has done for the children could hardly be better expressed than in the words of M. Combarieu. "Other composers have sung or portrayed childhood. Schumann is one of the most celebrated. He has written pieces for children which are pearls beyond price. But how different is the work of the Russian musician. Schumann remains a spec-

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\* From a notice by Debussy.

tator of the youngster's games, he dreams, he thinks and feels, and as a true German he is profoundly touched (always *Gemüth!*) as though in contemplation of a pellucid stream or a starry sky. . . . With Moussorgsky it is a very different thing. He is no onlooker; in depicting the children he himself returns to childhood; one might say that he plays with them and sulks with them. . . ."

On the publication of "The Nursery," Moussorgsky received a gratifying surprise in the shape of a most warm appreciation from Liszt; the feelings thereby aroused are expressed in a letter from the former to Stasoff. "Liszt amazes me. If I *am* a musical simpleton, it seems that I was not one when I wrote 'The Nursery.' For, to understand children, to look upon them as human beings with minds of their own and not as so many amusing dolls, is not the privilege of simpletons."

As has elsewhere been chronicled, it was in the winter of 1871-2 that Guédéonoff approached Moussorgsky, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakoff and César Cui with his "Mlada" project, and Moussorgsky was busy with the composition of the portion for which he had made himself responsible, until the end of that winter. His contribution included the setting of a grand fantasmagoric scena, "The Offering to the Black Goat on the Bare Mountain," which was a somewhat modified version of the symphonic poem written in 1867 "Mlada," as we know, was abandoned.

## VI.

### "KHOVANTCHINA."

QUITE soon after Moussorgsky had finished working upon "Mlada," Stasoff proposed to him the composition of another opera. Stasoff considered that "the antagonism between the old Russia and the new, and the triumph of the latter, would provide excellent material. Moussorgsky," continues Stasoff, "was of the same mind. . . . He set to work with ardour. To study the history of the Raskolniks (Old Believers) and the chronicles of seventeenth century Russia involved immense labour. The many long letters he wrote me at this time were full of information as to his researches and views as to the music, characters and scenes of the opera. The best sections were written between 1872 and 1875."

Moussorgsky's enthusiasm for his new work, and the extent to which he was engrossed in it are best described by his own expression of amusement, when, in 1873, the performance of the three fragments of "Boris Godounoff" was announced to take place at the Maryinsky Theatre. "When our attempts to represent human beings by living music shall be under-

stood by those who understand the art of living, and when those who merely vegetate begin to throw handfuls of mud at us; when we are crucified by the musical Pharisees, then shall we have begun to make real progress. The more mud the greater progress. This is how they will criticise 'Boris.' It is highly gratifying to think that we are absorbed in 'Khovantchina,' whilst they are reproaching us for 'Boris.' Our gaze is fixed upon the future and we are not to be deterred by criticism. They will accuse us of having violated all the divine and human canons. We shall just say 'Yes,' adding to ourselves that there will be many such violations ere long. 'You will soon be forgotten,' they will croak, 'for ever and aye,' and our answer will be: '*Non, non, et non, Madame.*'"

To appreciate the profound significance of "Khovantchina" in its relation to the social and religious strife which it depicts, it is necessary to turn to those pages in Russian history which record the struggles arising out of the revision of the bible.

During his regency, Boris Godounoff made an important change in ecclesiastical administration. Hitherto the Russian Church had been governed from Constantinople in consequence of the adoption by Russia of the Byzantine form of Christianity. Godounoff, desirous of obtaining the support of the Russian clergy, established a Patriarchate at Moscow. To this office Nikon was appointed in 1642. During his tenure, Nikon determined upon making what he considered a very necessary revision in the liturgical books of the Church. These had for generations past been copied by hand, and many inaccuracies had crept

into their pages. On the adoption of printing, these inaccuracies were of course invested with sanction. Nikon went to the fountain-head and obtained copies of the Greek originals from Constantinople with the object of making the necessary restoration. Errors had also been made in copying the painted icons or sacred tokens. Nikon introduced certain reforms in the ritual in reference to the manner of making the sign of the cross, of pronouncing the name of Jesus, and of alluding to the Deity in the Creed. These changes, together with those in the liturgical books, brought about the schism which divided the whole Russian Church. The adherents of the traditional and accepted form of worship called themselves Old Believers; the reformers called them Raskolniks or Dissenters.\* Nothing could more plainly reveal the fanaticism which has entered into the dispute between the two bodies than the surviving rejection of all printed religious literature which the Raskolniks still consider as more likely to contain errors than written versions. By some of the Raskolniks, to cross oneself before a painted icon is characterised as an act of blasphemy.

Allied with this movement against ecclesiastical reform we find in "Khovantchina" an allusion to a contemporaneous dislike of Western ideas and customs which were already being introduced into Russia, an attitude of distrust which came to be justified long

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\* The Orthodox Church had been doing its best for nearly three hundred years to stamp out these non-conforming sects, when, in 1906, Stolypin granted recognition to all religious sects in Russia.



after, when a taste for the art, music, literature, and even a knowledge of the Russian tongue itself, were regarded as "bad form."

The period from which the action of "Khovantchina" is derived is that between the years 1682 and 1689. Féodor, the eldest son of the Czar Alexis, had just died without issue. The throne was then occupied by Peter (afterwards Peter the Great), who was ten years old, and who was given the preference over his brother Ivan, a child of feeble intellect. Sophia, a daughter of Alexis by his first marriage, was not inclined to suffer the claim of Ivan to be thus waived, and she organised a revolt of the Streltsy (archers—from *striela*, an arrow), a standing regiment of guards, most of whom were Old Believers and whose leader was Prince Ivan Khovansky, with the result that Ivan was appointed to share the throne with his brother Peter, Sophia acting as regent. The regency lasted for seven years, although it came near to being interrupted by a new revolt, this time engineered by Khovansky in favour of his son Andrew. This rising proved abortive owing to the assassination of the elder Khovansky, and when at the end of the regency, on Peter's taking over the reins of government and asserting his independence, the Old Believers found that he intended to pursue a policy of Westernisation, they resolved in thousands to commit suicide rather than accept teachings which they considered as emanating from the Anti-Christ. It was Peter who gave the name of Khovantchina to the risings associated with the Khovansky family.

Moussorgsky, at Stasoff's suggestion, made use, in "Khovantchina," of much of the copious material

forthcoming from these historical circumstances. Stasoff placed a complete sketch of the dramatic material before Moussorgsky. "I thought it would be well," he said, "to take as the central figure that of Dositheus, the spiritual head of the Old Believers, a strong, energetic, profoundly intelligent and experienced man, who would act as the guiding influence over the two princes, Khovansky (representing the old Russian regime of traditionalism and fanaticism) and Galitsin, who, together with Sophia, should represent the Europeanising influence. Other characters; the occurrences which took place in the German and Streltsian quarters; the priest and his elderly sister, his young nephews; the two Old Believer women—the one Martha, full of youth and passion (something after the style of Potiphar's wife), the other, Susan, in the sere and yellow, whose predominating characteristic should be a fanatic and intolerant asceticism—both women perpetually in conflict; the youthful Peter with his playmates; Sophia, artful and energetic with her fierce Streltsy; the Old Believers and their collective suicide on hearing from Dositheus that 'the old Russia is dying, the birth of the new is at hand'—all this seems to us a fruitful subject."

Moussorgsky did not, however, adopt Stasoff's scheme in its entirety. Owing to illness and the claims of another composition which occupied him at that time, he made ruthless cuts in the plan in order to arrive at the completion of a presentable version before it should be too late. In this way the unity of the drama was seriously menaced. Sophia and Peter were dispensed with. Martha is presented as quite a different character from that originally conceived, and

the amours of Andrew Khovansky were introduced, presumably as an imperative concession. Between the characters retained there is no lack of contrast; between Khovansky and Galitsin, representing two entirely different political tendencies, and further between Martha, standing for the full-blooded type of womanhood, and Susan, whose moral and religious fanaticism is the product of a nature exuberant only in a negative attitude towards the joys of life. The love intrigue brings in the contraposition of Khovansky's profligate son Andrew, and Emma, the unwilling victim of his amorous importunities.

After a short orchestral prelude, the curtain rises upon a scene representing the Red Square in Moscow, upon which dawn is just breaking. A group of Streltsy are seen, one of whom is lying near a pillar, mumbling sleepily about an attack of the previous evening in which many violent deeds had been wrought. A public letter-writer enters to assume his wonted "pitch," and after some horseplay at his expense the Streltsy leave the square. The noble, Chaklovity, then arrives and employs the letter-writer to draw up an impeachment of the Khovanskys, whom he accuses of plotting against the Czar. Whilst this is being concocted some people pass at the back of the stage singing a lively folk-song, and later the Streltsy are heard parading the neighbourhood, to the terror of Chaklovity and the writer. When the document is complete, Chaklovity takes possession of it and goes off, after recommending the writer to keep silence on the subject, if he would save his skin.

Immediately after, the stage becomes filled with people, and the Streltsy enter with the pompous

Khovansky at their head. He uses this position to obtain the support of the people and assumes the attitude of a fatherly ruler towards them, exhorting them to put down the rising on behalf of Peter. They receive him with expressions of respect and sing a chorus of acclamation in which the white swan of the Khovansky coat-of-arms is referred to. He then goes off followed by his guard and an enthusiastic crowd.

As they depart, Emma, a young Lutheran, is seen trying to avoid the importunities of Andrew Khovansky. She refuses to listen to his protestations of love, and bitterly reproaching him with having brought ruin and death upon her family, invites him to kill her. They are interrupted by Martha, an Old Believer, who accuses Andrew of infidelity towards herself. He, furious, draws his knife and tries to stab Martha, but she is too quick for him and tears the weapon from his grasp. She then proceeds to deliver a mystic prophecy in which in vague terms she foretells the ultimate fate of Andrew.

His father then returns with his guard, still followed by the flattering crowd, and inquires into the cause of the disturbance. Emma's appearance pleases him, and he directs his guard to seize her, but Andrew threatens all manner of violence, and finally tries to kill Emma to prevent her from being thus abducted. At this moment Dositheus arrives upon the scene, surrounded by Old Believers, and interferes in the altercation. He orders Martha to conduct Emma to her home and to protect her, and after the withdrawal of Khovansky, Dositheus addresses to the crowd an exhortation to remain faithful to the traditional and orthodox religion. The curtain falls on the solitary

figure of the venerable Dositheus; the departing crowd is heard chanting a supplication to the Deity.

Act II passes in the palace of Prince Galitsin. He is discovered at the rise of the curtain reading a letter from the regent Sophia, with whom, in earlier days, he has evidently been on terms of affection. His comments on her tender words reveal that his former feelings for her have not survived, and he is somewhat in fear of her irrepressible ambition. To him enters Martha, whom he has caused to be summoned. In spite of his Western education he credits her with the power of clairvoyance. Then follows a very effective scene. Martha calls for a basin of water, envelops herself in a long black cloak, and gazing into the water foretells disgrace and death to Galitsin. At the close of her incantation, Martha goes out. Galitsin is alarmed and incensed, and rings for a servant whom he instructs to see that Martha is seized and drowned in the neighbouring marshes. Galitsin is soliloquising over his own predicted degradation and the effect of the prevailing strife upon the fate of Russia, when Prince Khovansky enters unannounced. He complains of Galitsin's attitude toward the nobles and does his best to sting him by means of various discreditable insinuations. Galitsin at first preserves his temper, but before long becomes thoroughly nettled by Khovansky's sarcastic tone. Dositheus enters and tries to pacify the disputants. Outside the palace is heard the chanting of the Old Believers, and Dositheus interposes a remark to the effect that the activity of the people is in favourable contrast with the wordy wrangling of the nobles. Suddenly Martha rushes in with a story of an attempt upon her life by the royalist

faction. She is followed by Chaklovity, who brings news that Sophia has discovered the Khovansky plot against her, and the scene ends with a general bewilderment.

The third act takes place in the Streltsian quarter. The Old Believers pass, still chanting their hymn. Martha separates herself from them and seats herself upon a mound in front of Andrew Khovansky's house, which occupies one side of the stage. She sings a plaintive song reminiscent of the happier days, before Andrew's passion had cooled. She finishes by prophesying speedy retribution for his treachery. Her soliloquy is interrupted by Susan, who has overheard her passionate references to Andrew and is scandalised by these shameless allusions.

When Martha resumes her song, Susan becomes frenzied and invokes the fires of hell against the person of the abandoned Martha. During the subsequent altercation between the two women, Dositheus emerges from Khovansky's house and admonishes Susan with such vigour for her arrogance and harshness toward Martha, that the dried-up old woman flies in terror from the scene. There is a passage in which Dositheus comforts Martha, and reference is made to the coming suicide of Old Believers. On their departure Chaklovity enters from the opposite side of the stage and sings an aria invoking God's aid on behalf of his harassed country. At its conclusion there is a rush of Streltsy, all clamouring for a detailed narrative from the letter-writer, who has heard of an attack, by Peter's guard, upon a Streltsian force, in which the latter have been completely routed. The present contingent are now harried by their wives, who arrive in a mass and

upbraided them for their brutality and infidelity. When they are able once more to address themselves to the situation, they decide to ask their leader's advice. Old Khovansky comes out of his house and in response to their appeal counsels temporary submission to Peter.

The fourth act is in two scenes. The first is that of a large hall in the Khovansky country palace. Prince Ivan is discovered at table. The meal finished, he orders his singers to provide entertainment so that his somewhat gloomy thoughts may be dispelled. Presently a messenger arrives from Galitsin, who sends warning to Khovansky of a personal danger threatening him. Khovansky imagines this to be an attempt to frighten him, and after brusquely dismissing the messenger, calls for his Persian dancers. After a very pretty *divertissement*, Chaklovity enters with a command that Khovansky shall wait upon Sophia, the regent. Thinking this to be a sign of returning power, Khovansky dresses himself in his smartest and most ceremonious attire, and is about to start, cheered by a chorus of singers, who strike up the hymn of glory to the white swan, when he is stabbed to death. The whole entourage flies in terror. Chaklovity, the instigator of the crime, sings a strain of the hymn over the corpse, breaking out into a derisive laugh. The curtain falls.

The second scene represents a public square in Moscow. Crowds of people await the passage of some exiles under military escort, among whom is presently seen Prince Galitsin, now bereft of all power. Dositheus mixes with the people, lamenting the fall of two such leaders as Galitsin and Khovansky; he is joined by Martha, who brings word that the military have

received orders to put all the Old Believers to death. Dositheus decides thereupon that the time has come for them to die by their own hand.

Prince Andrew enters in haste, seeking Emma, and upbraids Martha for having hidden her. He is ignorant of his father's assassination. He threatens Martha with death, and she, desirous of enlightening him as to his true position, invites him to blow his horn and to summon the Streltsy. This he does, but there is not the immediate and reassuring reply he expects. Instead, the defeated Streltsy are brought in guarded by soldiers, the fallen archers bearing axes and fag-gots. A herald then announces that the two Czars, Ivan and Peter, have granted a pardon to the Old Believers, and the scene ends with their dispersal.

The final scene shows the Old Believers preparing for the act of self-immolation, which is to take place in a space outside a hermitage in the depths of a wood near Moscow. The Old Believers, encouraged by Dositheus, have decided that death is preferable to the inevitable renunciation of their faith. Martha's thoughts are with Andrew, whom she would like to share her fate, and presently he comes in sight, still searching for Emma. By an effort, half physical, half hypnotic, she manages to induce Andrew to mount the pyre just as it is being lighted. The Old Believers sing their hymn until silenced by the flames. The royal troops arrive and stand aghast at the spectacle. Trumpets ring out and the curtain falls to the sound of a military march\* which serves to symbolise the

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\* This march possesses a peculiar interest, seeing that it is associated with the Préobajensky, Moussorgsky's own regiment, which was raised by Peter the Great.



rising of the new Russia from the ashes of the old.

One of the most marked differences between "Boris Godounoff" and "Khovantchina" is that the latter has a completer dramatic continuity. While the scenes of "Boris Godounoff" are somewhat loosely connected and bear an appearance of being self-contained rather than that of interdependence, the dramatic interest of "Khovantchina" is gradually evolved, and with increasing effect, as the drama proceeds. This effect was secured in spite of the large amount of curtailment which the book underwent at the hands of Moussorgsky (who wrote it)—his reason for compression being that the composition of the work was causing him a good deal of trouble and he therefore believed that his creative energies were beginning to wane. Had "Khovantchina" been completed on the scale and according to the plan on which it was originally conceived, there is little doubt that the work would, as a drama, have possessed a very much greater power. Moussorgsky used his pruning-knife, not as an artistic weapon, but as an instrument of expediency, and in 1875, when the characters of Sophia and Peter were eliminated, everything that was not immediately reducible to shape was ruthlessly lopped off.

The music of "Khovantchina" is much better suited for its purpose than that of "Boris Godounoff." It is more classical in style, more lyrical, and gains rather than loses by being less deliberately realistic. Its comparative simplicity is a very fitting quality, for the dramatic substance of "Khovantchina" pertains so

largely to the primitive. The passion and the religious emotion which permeate the work are alike elemental.

The musical characterisation shows an increased subtlety, and the development of the personal themes is much more persistent than in "Boris Godounoff." Not only are the musical "labels" particularly appropriate, but their symphonic treatment is exceedingly happy. Nothing in the whole opera, for instance, is more successful than the dialogue between Galitsin and Khovansky, in which the admirably suggested contrast between the two characters enlivens an act (the second), which on the whole is somewhat dull. "Khovantchina" alludes even more frequently to folk-song than does "Boris Godounoff." And here again, be it noted, Moussorgsky is found profiting by his particular knowledge of the religious music of the Middle Ages, acquired under the guidance of Kroupsky.

There are many numbers of great beauty in "Khovantchina." The preludial music to the first act, which so vividly depicts the sights and sounds of dawn, the folk-song of the passing crowd during Chaklovity's conversation with the letter-writer, the splendid chorus acclaiming Khovansky in Act I, the song in which Martha first reproaches Andrew with his inconstancy, Dositheus's exhortation to the Old Believers, with which the first act concludes, Martha's "divination by water" scene with Galitsin (which has since become popular as a separate song), the Old Believers' chorus at the opening of Act III, the song of Martha, which so enrages Susan—one of the most inspired and charming pieces in the whole work—Chaklovity's lament for his falling country, the concluding chorus

of Act III, the delightful song of the Hungarian mercenary given by Khovansky's serving-women, the Persian dances which succeed this; all are striking testimony to Moussorgsky's power, both of inventing beautiful music, and of beautifying traditional music.

Although he seems to have profited by bestowing a minor attention to the demands of musical realism, "*Khovantchina*" provides a certain number of instances to show that Moussorgsky has plainly occupied himself with realistic effect. Thus there is again a figure to suggest the writing of the scrivener in Act I which recalls that used to accompany the movements of Pimen's quill in " *Boris Godounoff*"; the "nagging" quality of the music reinforcing, as it were, the protest of the Streltsy women in Act III, and the syncope which, shortly after, accompanies the entrance of the "winded" scrivener, are both notable. As to dramatic legitimacy, nothing is better worth quoting than the manner in which the letter-writer's recital of the proclamation to his listening client, Chaklovity (Act I) is welded to the chorus of the passing crowd. In such achievements as this, Moussorgsky demonstrates that it is possible to accord an equal consideration to dramatic verity and musical beauty without making the slightest sacrifice. The only doubtful moment in the whole opera is the pyre scene, which depends overmuch upon the ingenuity of the stage-contriver, a functionary with whose limitations Wagner representations have made opera-goers only too familiar.

The unfinished "*Khovantchina*" was orchestrated after Moussorgsky's death by Rimsky-Korsakoff, who found a provisional arrangement of the opera for

piano and voice, which was completed, but for the finale, by the composer during his stay in the country in the summer of 1880. The last pages of the work were added by Rimsky-Korsakoff. The Persian dances were actually orchestrated during Moussorgsky's lifetime.

A good deal of discussion has arisen as to the fitness of some of Rimsky-Korsakoff's emendations of "Khovantchina." M. Calvocoressi has pointed out in a newspaper article that the most recent acting version contains a good deal which was suppressed or modified by Rimsky-Korsakoff and subsequently restored by Messrs. Stravinsky and Ravel, thanks to which labour, says the distinguished critic, "we can see that the said score (that published by Rimsky-Korsakoff in 1883) was little better than a libel on his (the composer's) creative faculties. Rimsky-Korsakoff . . . erred in all good faith . . . Moussorgsky believed anything resembling formalism to be fatal to art; he was as convinced that Rimsky-Korsakoff's idiom and methods were superfluously stiff and conventional as Rimsky-Korsakoff was convinced that 'Boris Godounoff' and 'Khovantchina' remained uncouth and crude. So that the very spirit of Rimsky-Korsakoff's emendations—which Moussorgsky would never have tolerated—is antagonistic to the spirit of the music emendated." In a further article M. Calvocoressi comments upon a letter published by M. Andrew Rimsky-Korsakoff (the son) in which the writer quite ill-advisedly characterises the restoration as an act of vandalism and actually puts up a plea for the consideration of "Khovantchina" as the fruit of a collaboration between Moussorgsky and the writer's father.

Here, as M. Calvocoressi's comments justly imply, we have a definitely flagrant and peculiarly perverse misapplication of the word "vandalism" by one for whom the vandalistical cap might well have been made to measure!

"Khovantchina" was given its first complete public performance in 1885 at St. Petersburg through the efforts of a number of persons interested in the whole life-work of the composer. It was revived at the Solodovnikoff Theatre, Moscow, in 1897, but has never been accorded the measure of attention which, in Russia, of all countries, it so thoroughly deserves.

## VII.

### THE LAST PHASE.

SOON after the production of "Boris Godounoff," Moussorgsky addressed himself to the composition of a work in which the element of "programme" was introduced in a manner so daring that it is difficult even now, after a continued development and exploitation of the programmatic idea, to cite a parallel. An exhibition of pictures by Moussorgsky's recently deceased friend, Victor Hartmann, was held in the spring of 1874. Moussorgsky, desirous of expressing on his own behalf a respect for the memory of the painter, chose, as his medium, the reproduction of certain of the paintings exhibited in the form of a series of tone-pictures for the piano. The title of this set of pieces is "Pictures from an Exhibition." In them the composer, in a manner thoroughly characteristic, has relied upon rhythmic suggestion rather than harmonic colouring in the musical projection of the "literary" subject. The pieces are preceded by an introduction called "Promenade," the theme of which is employed to suggest the perambulations which, as it were, punctuated the actual inspection of the pictures.

"The composer," says Stassoff, to whom the suite is dedicated, "here shows himself walking to and fro, now loitering, now hurrying to examine a congenial work; sometimes his gait slackens; Moussorgsky is thinking sadly of his dead friend."

The pictures treated are as follows: (1) "Gnomus." Picture representing a little goblin hobbling clumsily along on his misshapen legs. (2) "Il Vecchio Castello" A mediæval castle in front of which sings a troubadour. (3) "Tuileries." Children wrangling in the Tuileries garden. (4) "Bydlo." A Polish chariot on huge wheels drawn by oxen. (5) "Ballet of Chickens in their Shells." A sketch by Hartmann for scenery of the ballet, "Trilby." (6) "Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle." Two Polish Jews, one prosperous, the other needy. (7) "Limoges." The market place. Bickering market-women. (8) "The Catacombs." Hartmann represents himself visiting the interior of the catacombs of Paris. (9) "The Hut on Fowls' Legs." Hartmann's picture represents a clock in the shape of Baba-Yaga's hut. Moussorgsky added the trail of the witch journeying to and fro in her traditional mortar. (10) "The Bohatyr's Gate at Kieff." Hartmann's drawing was of a proposed gate in the old Russian massive style with a cupola in the shape of a slavonic helmet.

Of this suite it is hardly possible to say that it possesses such qualities as are likely immediately to appeal to the pianist. These "pictures" form an exceedingly successful study in realism, but one is obliged to admit that for the most part the numbers which are strikingly realistic are the least pianistic. The realism of "Gnomus," of "Bydlo," with its

rhythmic insinuation of lumbering cattle, the amazing mastery in portraiture of the musical images of the prosperous Goldenberg, and the skinny, whining Schmuyle, the power and resource displayed in the tone-picture of the old legendary witch, are excellent examples of the out-and-out descriptive in music. The pictures of the Spanish castle and of the brawling market-women at Limoges might conceivably be considered as pleasantly musical, but not for a moment as powerfully conjuring up the vision of Hartmann's work or of anything resembling it. The number in which the pictorial best succeeds without detracting from the absolute musical value is that of the Kieff Gate. Here we have the effect of architecture on the mind, which could never have been conveyed by words, rendered in terms of music—a feat which has in a sense been emulated by Debussy in his "Cathedrale Engloutie"—one which, in defiance of the apparent anachronism the employment of such a term involves (in discussing a work of the later seventies) is only to be regarded as a particularly aggressive specimen of futurism.

A further example of the musical reproduction of the pictorial, attributable to the important influence exerted on Moussorgsky by his friend Golenicheff-Koutousoff, a poet of no little ability, with whom he shared rooms at this time for a whole year, came immediately after the "Exhibition." Golenicheff-Koutousoff was inspired by Verestchagin's famous picture, "Left Behind," representing a neglected corpse on a battlefield, to write a short poem, and this was set to music by Moussorgsky, not this time with a view to depicting the actual thing seen, but rather with the



object of obtaining a musical evocation of the emotions aroused by the contemplation of Verestchagin's ghastly painting.

Golenicheff-Koutousoff is in a way responsible for two works—two groups of songs—which figure amongst the most remarkable items of Moussorgsky's output. These were written during the close association which the circumstance of their common dwelling-place afforded the friends, and the texts are the work of the poet. The first series, entitled "Without Sunlight," contains six songs for baritone or mezzo-soprano. The opening song, "Within Four Walls," is the lamentation of an invalid, who, within the dull white walls of a hospital, suffers the slow agony of approaching death. "In these suffocating chords," wrote M. Pierre Lalo, "one seems to breathe the air around a death-bed." The second, "Lost in the Crowd," reveals the pain of Moussorgsky's later years and shows more plainly by its music than mere words could tell that in the portrayal of suffering the composer had little need to look beyond his own life for inspiration. "The Festal Days are Over," the third of the series, is a doleful reminiscence—the poignant wretchedness induced by the recollection being musically emphasised by the harmonic and rhythmic devices which Moussorgsky employed with such skill and which seem so exactly fitting for the emotional interpretation of the text as to stamp them with every appearance of complete spontaneity. In "Ennui," the fourth, the vocal portion is hardly ever melodic and only breaks away from pure recitative here and there to join the accompanying melody. In the penultimate "Elegie," the voice mingles with the accompaniment—is never quite

ndependent of it, and in the last, "On the Water," he melodic line of the piano part is almost wholly ollowed by the vocal, which thus maintains a character rather musical than declamatory. As to the oetic content of the latter numbers, their setting contributes to the whole series a comprehensive realisation of an idea which, if not strictly comparable with that of Newman's "Dream of Gerontius," at least recalls t. "Without Sunlight" is a lyrical prevision of death and transfiguration.

The second group of songs to words of Golenicheff-Koutousoff, of which the first three appeared in 1875, and the last in 1877, are called "Songs and Dances of Death." In these marvellous little pieces there is a fusion of all the greatest components of Moussorgsky's genius. The poems of Golenicheff-Koutousoff seem to have appealed with such intensity to the composer as to have evoked from him a work of art which has no equal either in his own output or indeed in the whole range of modern song. In the "Songs and Dances of Death," Moussorgsky is found capable of creating "absolute" or "pure" music without sacrificing in any degree the realistic interpretation of the sense and emotion of his text; he is able, musically, to "realise" both the physical and psychological elements in his subject-matter and yet to retain the essential value of the music *qua* music. The poetic invention of Golenicheff-Koutousoff has a superlatively beautiful and appropriate complement in the musical commentary of his collaborator, and those who may have difficulty in appreciating the "daring" methods of the "Nursery" or of "Without Sunlight" will here, at least, find matter that requires no effort of the imagination, but ap-

peals immediately by means of an extraordinary power and delicate charm to the emotional sensibilities.

"'Death and the Peasant,'" writes M. Bellaigue, of the first of this series, "is a rondo, but a rondo of death." It is night, and on the open plain Death has seized a peasant, broken down by suffering and drink. To the tune of a Trépak (national dance) Death sympathises with his wretched captive and promises him comforts denied him by Life. "My white snow shall cover thee and warm thy perished limbs." Death calls upon the tempest to prepare the bed and to furnish a slumber song. The peasant is sung to sleep. "Sleep, my friend; henceforth be happy. See! the summer returns . . . the sun smiles on the plains . . . the corn ripens . . ." The rocking rhythm of the slumber song gives place to the Trépak in a softened version, which dies away in a sob, and in the three final chords is reflected the gentle smile which betokens the peasant's realisation of perfect peace.

The "Berceuse," which succeeds, plumbs the depths of pathos. To a mother who has been watching all night by her dying child, comes, by the window, Dawn; through the door enters Death, who, with persuasive words of comfort and sympathy, offers to relieve her vigil. "I will watch over him even better than thou; my song will be softer." The terrified mother protests and pleads in vain. "In my arms," replies Death. "the child will sleep well . . ." and after a final outburst of terror from the mother, in a passage in which the music itself recalls the "Erl-King" of Schubert . . . "there! my song has brought slumber . . . sleep, child, sleep . . ."

The next song, "Serenade," is the most lyrical of

the series. A young girl nearing her end lies by an open window. Death comes in the guise of a youth and proffers deliverance by means of his magic power. To the rhythm of a serenade, he sings: "Take thy mirror; in thy face is resplendent beauty, thy cheeks rival the roses, thy locks are of silk, how supple thy graceful body . . . thy breath is warm like the sun; I am entranced by thy charm. To possess thee I will bestow my most precious possession." The girl thus won over is enfolded in the deathly embrace. Her breathing dies down . . . then in a final outburst the triumphant Serenader exclaims, "Thou art mine!" The diminishing tonic pedal, the awful silence, and the last chord of exultation succeeding it, produce an effect which causes the heart to stand still.

The last song is called "The Commander-in-Chief." It is exceedingly dramatic, but the translation of its drama into music reveals rather more of the conventional than we are accustomed to in the work of Moussorgsky. A battle has been raging all day. "A few bars suffice," says M. Bellaigue, "to sketch the corpse-strewn plain, the Russian plain, the immensity of which the music of Russia surpasses itself in presenting to us." With nightfall, Death appears in the uniform of a general riding his charger, the pale moonlight revealing the glistening bones of the skeleton through his diaphanous garb. He climbs on to a mound and mockingly orders a parade. Here we have Death not wooing nor pleading, but frankly jeering at those who relieve him of so much labour. On his face we perceive a sardonic expression. The music is in martial strain; in this number the note of tragedy is struck, but the pathos is not of an intimate quality. In the

other songs of the group Moussorgsky makes us feel as though we stood between Death and his victim. But in "The Commander-in-Chief" we feel at a comparatively safe distance and are spectators of, rather than participators in, the scene.

That these collections—"Without Sunlight" and "Songs and Dances of Death"—composed between 1874 and 1877, were never performed in Russia until the year 1902, is not necessarily to be attributed to a positive want of taste and judgment in the country of their origin, but rather to the circumstance that they were absolutely unlike anything that had yet been written in the form of songs. They were first produced in Paris in 1896, and were not heard in Moscow until 1902. The critics on both occasions seem to have been uniformly favourable, and in the first-named city a full appreciation of their extraordinary genius was evinced by the leading writers on music. The Moscow critic, Krouglikoff, writing on the subject of "Without Sunlight," avowed that he had always considered this work as showing Moussorgsky at his feeblest—an opinion which he had shared, it is necessary to add, with such strong partisans of the composer as César Cui and even his friend Stasoff. "But," continues Krouglikoff, "I must make full amends . . . 'Within Four Walls,' 'On the Water,' 'Ennui,' have completely humbled me . . . When such a talent as this illuminates one, one cannot be without sunlight."

It must be borne in mind that during the period in which the above works were composed, and indeed intermittently until the end of his life, Moussorgsky was occupied with "Khovantchina." This labour, how-

ever, in spite of such obstacles as failing health and certain excesses, which latter, while doubtless providing some little mental relief, must have contributed to the physical decadence, does not constitute the sum of his creative products. In 1874 he took one of the choruses from "*Salammbô*," the work which had already been drawn upon for several numbers in "*Boris Godounoff*," revised, enlarged and polished it. In its new guise, under the name of "*Joshua*," it took the form of a vocal solo with mixed chorus, and was completed in 1877. "*Joshua*" is cited by M. Calvo-coressi as one of the few instances in which an Oriental flavour figures in the music of Moussorgsky.

About the same time Moussorgsky conceived the idea of writing an operatic work in which he could dedicate the chief character to the interpretation of his friend Petroff, the singer who had created the rôle of Varlaam in "*Boris Godounoff*." For his libretto he took one of the "*Stories of Mirgorod*," by Nicholas Gogol, the author of "*Marriage*," entitled "*The Fair at Sorotchinsk*." Here again he drew some material (that which had already been utilised in the ill-fated "*Mlada*") from "*Salammbô*." Of this work only a few fragments were completed. One of its numbers, a Hopak, was afterwards revised and took the form of a piano piece, which later on was orchestrated by Liadoff. Such of the fragments of "*The Fair at Sorotchinsk*" as could be issued were published in 1904 and were performed in Paris at the Théâtre des Arts in the spring of 1913.

We are now entering upon what may be regarded as Moussorgsky's mental as well as physical decline.

A tendency to melancholy was heightened by the withdrawal of "Boris Godounoff" in 1876 from the bill of the Imperial Opera. His funds were extremely low, and as the small salary derived from his employ by the State was insufficient, he began to undertake the playing of accompaniments at concerts, a task for which he was particularly well qualified, but he was not successful in obtaining much work of the kind.

In 1878 the death of his close friend Petroff, the widely-esteemed singer, was very deeply felt by Moussorgsky, and for the rest of that year he found it impossible to apply himself to any musical work.

In 1879, after a change of State employment, he arranged a long concert tour in South Russia with Mme Leonoff, a singer of repute who had associated herself with his compositions and had figured as the inn-keeper in "Boris Godounoff." This enterprise was a marked success, both artists receiving every demonstration of appreciation in the principal South Russian towns. During the tour Moussorgsky, encouraged no doubt by the warmth of his reception, composed several small piano pieces, inspired by his immediate geographic environment. The "Song of the Flea"—the entirely unrepresentative work by which he first became known to English audiences—was also produced.

In the winter of 1879-80 his only work was the orchestration of his contribution to "Mlada," which immediately after was performed by the Russian Musical Society, under the title of "Turkish March." During the following summer he made a few sketches for a suite for orchestra, harp and piano, which seems also to have been inspired by his Southern tour, and

worked for the last time on "Khovantchina." He gave up his appointment and lived for a time in the country, but becoming weaker and weaker in health, he was obliged to enter the military hospital in St. Petersburg, where, on his forty-second birthday, March 16, 1881, he died. One of the last to chat with him at his bedside was Balakireff, who survived him some thirty years. During Moussorgsky's last days his portrait was painted by the eminent Russian artist, Répin, and this quite ruthlessly faithful picture provides a sad reminder of the fearful inroads made upon its subject's physique by the demoralising effect of poverty and drink.

Moussorgsky was buried in the Alexander Nevsky Cemetery, and his grave was adorned a few years later by a monument commissioned by various friends and admirers.

Moussorgsky has himself provided us with material suitable to serve as epitaph to the present chronicle of his life and work which may best be concluded by a quotation from his brief autobiography: "By virtue of his views on music and of the nature of his compositions, Moussorgsky stands apart from all existing types of musicians. The creed of his artistic faith is as follows: 'Art is a means of human intercourse and not in itself an end.' The whole of his creative activity was dictated by this guiding principle. Convinced, like Virchow and Gervinus, that human speech is strictly governed by musical laws, Moussorgsky considers that the musical reproduction, not of isolated manifestations of sensibility, but of articulate humanity as a whole is the function of his art." He holds



that in the domain of the musical art, reformers such as Palestrina, Bach, Gluck, Beethoven, Berlioz and Liszt have created certain artistic laws; he does not consider these laws as immutable but as strictly subject to the conditions of evolution and progress no less than the whole world of thought."

## VIII.

### RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF.

**I**N our survey of the life and work of Moussorgsky we have acquired sufficient information to enable us to perceive that both the aims and achievements of Rimsky-Korsakoff were in sharp contrast to those of his friend. A man of regular habits, he had a respect for tradition which was to lead him into the firm conviction that his own advancement in matters artistic was best to be secured by an evolutionary and not a revolutionary process. Thus it was that after having made his mark as a composer he was attacked by qualms that progress was impossible for him without a thorough grasp of that scientific knowledge which has been accumulated by successive observers of musical evolution. As to the actual effect upon Rimsky-Korsakoff of this retarded grounding in musical theory, there are certain definite indications. We know that it did not choke the flow of his inspiration, but at the same time one cannot help feeling that it was these studies which awakened the latent academicism to be held accountable for his want of appreciation of Moussorgsky's

attempts to break down boundaries. Further, his adoption, fairly late in life, of that type of symphonic development, regarded by Russians as peculiarly non-Russian and typical of the occidental and more especially of the German mind, seems likely to have sprung from the same origin. On more than one occasion, it is interesting to note, Moussorgsky expressed himself with considerable force concerning what seemed to him a thoroughly misguided step on his friend's part, and when it is borne in mind that the two composers lived together for some little time, one cannot but feel that the bond of friendship must have been fairly tough to have withstood the strain exerted upon it, not only by such a difference in temperament as their opposed views suggest, but by the difference in the views themselves.

It has been seen that the operatic precept of Dargomijsky, as fulfilled in the "Stone-Guest," became something of a burden to the "Group." A survey of his dramatic works, shows that while Rimsky-Korsakoff was not unmindful of his obligation to produce operas of the declamatory type, he could not settle down into an acceptance of the hard and fast canons of Dargomijsky. Classification of his operas reveals a sort of wandering movement in search of a definite procedure, and towards the end of his life he showed a very marked sympathy with Wagner. But failure to render a consistent obeisance to the "Stone-Guest" does not imply a total secession from the tenets of Russian musical nationalism, and Rimsky-Korsakoff is entitled to be regarded as an upholder of the Glinkist tradition, since in addition to his fund of melodic inspiration he was a determined advocate of

folk-music. He made a remarkable collection of popular melodies and drew heavily upon it in building up his operas. His persistent and felicitous employment of the elements of nationalism, not only in his operas, but in his orchestral works and in some of his songs, seems to warrant our considering him as the culminating figure in the nationalistic movement.

Nicholas Andreievich Rimsky-Korsakoff was born at Tikhvin in the Government of Novgorod, on March 18, 1844. He shared with his colleagues, Balakireff and Moussorgsky, the great advantage of spending his early life in the country—one which was denied Borodin. On his father's estate were four Jews who formed a little band which was called upon to supply music at all social functions taking place under the Korsakoff's roof. From the music heard on these occasions the child obtained his first impressions of the art. At the age of six he received his first piano lessons, and three years later the creative impulse was already manifesting itself. His parents, like those of Moussorgsky, do not appear to have had any desire to stifle their son's taste for music, but they had no thought of his adopting any other vocation than that of the navy, which was a family tradition. Lovers of Kipling will remember a string of names cited in "Stalky and Co."\* borne by "sons of officers in one or other of the services." In Russia, it seems, the name of Rimsky-Korsakoff has in some degree a like association. In 1856, when twelve years of age, young Nicholas was taken to the St. Petersburg Naval Col-

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\* "The Flag of their Country."

lege. He contrived to leaven the ordinary curriculum of that establishment with musical studies, taking lessons on the piano and 'cello, his piano master, Kanillé by name, giving him some instruction in composition.

In 1861 the youth made the acquaintance of Balakireff and was brought into touch, in consequence, with Cui, Moussorgsky and Porodin, with the quite natural result that he then began to take his musical studies very seriously. He commenced a course of lessons with Balakireff, and these continued for about a year, until, in 1862, Rimsky-Korsakoff found himself obliged to undertake the three years' cruise in foreign waters which serves to conclude the education of the naval cadet. But, besides increasing his technical resources, his intercourse with the leader of the "coterie" had already made a very deep impression upon him and it is not surprising that the young sailor-musician was unwilling to sever his connection with his preceptor for so long a period. It was therefore arranged that correspondence should be kept up as far as possible during the cruise, and thus it was that Rimsky-Korsakoff was able to improve himself musically during his tour of the world by submitting his essays in composition to Balakireff and receiving from him at the first available port a detailed criticism of his work. A letter sent home to Cui during the voyage shows pretty plainly that Rimsky-Korsakoff was fully alive to the discomforts of seafaring, but some of his later compositions prove that he was by no means devoid of a poetic appreciation of his marine surroundings. The experiences referred to in this letter did not at any rate damp his musical ardour, and during this cruise on the "Almaz" ("Diamond") he

composed and revised the symphony which bears the distinction of being the first work in that form by a Russian composer.

In 1865, on the conclusion of his naval cruise, Rimsky-Korsakoff resumed his personal association with Balakireff and the other members of the "Group," and in December of that year the symphony was given its initial performance by Balakireff at a concert of the Free School directed by him. The public showed a great interest in the work, an interest which naturally became much keener when a young naval lieutenant came forward to acknowledge their plaudits.

In 1866 we find him inaugurating the friendship with Moussorgsky which lasted until the latter's death in 1881, and the two composers, as we learn from the records of Mme. Chestakoff, the sister of Glinka, always came earlier than the rest of the little circle to their meetings, in order to exchange notes and impressions.

It seems likely that the importance of folk-lore as a basis of nationalistic music formed the subject of some of their confabulations, for in the following year, 1867, Rimsky-Korsakoff, whilst perusing some of the legends in which the Russian literature is so rich, was so vividly impressed by that of "Sadko" that he decided to compose a symphonic version of the story. "Sadko" (Op. 5), which is the first orchestral poem ever composed by a Russian, was one of the first fruits of the poetic inspiration derived from the composer's term of cruising. Its basis is an old legend concerning a merchant-minstrel whose impassioned performance on the "guslee" during a sojourn in a submarine kingdom causes storms and shipwrecks. As

we shall have later to refer to an opera on the same subject written nearly thirty years after the symphonic poem, our detailed treatment of the maritime literary material common to both works is deferred. "Sadko" is scored for a full orchestra with bass-drum, cymbals and gong, and, as a piece of thorough-going "programme music," is closely related to the subject illustrated. It reveals the composer's early power of brilliant orchestration, his feeling for splendid effects of colour and above all his possession of humour. It was first performed by the German Musical Union at Altenburg in 1876, but was not heard in St. Petersburg until 1882, when it achieved a success.

Soon after the completion of "Sadko" Rimsky-Korsakoff began his orchestral fantasia on Serbian themes (Op. 6). This work was the means of attracting the notice of Tchaikovsky, as it was produced at a charity concert at which he made his first appearance as conductor. Rimsky-Korsakoff's fantasia was rather scornfully received by the critics, but Tchaikovsky had enjoyed a good opportunity, during rehearsals, of gaining a close acquaintance with the work and had previously heard encomiastic reports of its composer from Balakireff. Favourably impressed with the fantasia and convinced that the St. Petersburg circle were well-disposed towards him, Tchaikovsky hastened to show his friendly esteem by publishing an article in the paper which had made light of Rimsky-Korsakoff's powers, expressing himself as very highly pleased with the work. This was his first essay in musical criticism and the beginning of a friendship which was kept up by correspondence for many years.

Rimsky-Korsakoff began now to turn his attention

to the composition of operas—a sphere of work which was to form a permanent attraction for him and in which he became the most fertile of all the Russian school. His operatic career shows plainly enough the obstacles which bestrew the path of the conscientious composer of music-drama who is anxious to preserve the unities. The legacy of Dargomyjsky—the principles of the “Stone-Guest”—became the source of much artistic doubt which troubled Rimsky-Korsakoff almost to the end of his life. Cheshikin, in his survey of Russian opera, likens the case of the Russian operatic composer to that of Columbus starting out to find India and discovering America; himself by no means satisfied with the result, his followers more or less contented. The operatic composer, says Cheshikin, has not succeeded in attaining his ideal, but has introduced many novel features which may be calculated to satisfy the requirements of even the most fastidious opera-goer.

Rimsky-Korsakoff, despite his vacillations in the matter of vocal writing, will be found to have adhered to one of the most important axioms formulated by Cui in his manifesto, namely, that the music of an opera must have a consistent intrinsic value as music apart from its interpretative mission. Another feature of his operatic work is his faithfulness to Russian subject-matter. In his fifteen operas there are but three exceptions. One treats of Polish life and is by a Russian librettist, the second is based upon a drama of ancient Rome by Mey, and the third takes as its libretto a famous work of Pushkin. A sufficiently striking comparison can here be made which illustrates a point to be touched upon later. Of the nine-



teen operas of Rubinstein but eight have Russian libretti and in one of these, "Demon" (Lermontoff), the choice does not seem to have been the outcome of any predilection for nationalism, but rather a desire to meet a demand for nationalistic opera to which the encouragement given to Moussorgsky by the imperial operatic authorities (in 1872) appeared to testify.

In "Pskovitianka," Rimsky-Korsakoff's first opera—begun in 1870—we find evidence pointing to an anxiety to produce a work thoroughly representative of the prevailing views as to operatic construction. The solo-vocal portions are cast in *mezzo-recitative*. The chorus is given great prominence, there is a liberal use of folk-song, and the subject, which belongs to Russian history, is taken from a drama by the native poet, Leo Meÿ.

The drama deals with events which occurred in the reign of Ivan the Terrible (1547-84), and touches upon the cherished privilege of self-government which in those times attached to certain Russian cities. At the opening of the play the city of Novgorod has just been deprived of its freedom, and in the endeavour to resist the interference of Ivan, a fearful holocaust has befallen its people. Pskoff, another autonomous city—the scene of the drama—is in dread of a similar fate, anticipated as an inevitable consequence of Ivan's threatened advent. The citizens of Pskoff, meeting in council, are faced with two alternatives; the first, advanced by Prince Tokmakoff, the Governor, is submission to the tyrant; the second, impetuously advocated by the free-spirited Michael Toucha, the son of the Mayor (*posadnik*), is that of unqualified resistance and an uncompromising claim to the retention of civic

liberty. The citizens choose the former, but Toucha gains the support of the militia. Toucha is in love with Olga (the "Maid of Pskoff"), the supposed daughter of Tokmakoff, but the prince does not favour the young man's suit. When the Czar arrives at the Governor's house he is struck by Olga's resemblance to a former lover, Vera Scheloga, and on definitely identifying her as his own daughter, he decides to renounce his tyrannical plans respecting the city's future. The first scene of the last act introduces a royal hunt, after the passing of which Toucha makes an endeavour to win Olga over from her allegiance to Ivan. This is interrupted by myrmidons of the noble Matuta, who is favoured by Tokmakoff as Toucha's rival for Olga's hand. Toucha is wounded and Olga is carried off. In the last scene the news of his newly-found daughter's abduction is brought to the Czar in his tent. He furiously demands Olga's immediate deliverance and on joining him she manages to extract a promise of pardon for the insurgent Toucha. Hardly is the point settled when Toucha, at the head of his militia, makes an attack upon the royal guard, and Olga, anxious to reassure her lover as to his future safety and to give him news of an amnesty granted to Pskoff, on leaving the tent for this purpose is accidentally killed by the combatants outside. The drama ends with the grief of Ivan, prostrate on the corpse of his daughter.

"Pskovitianka" is in three acts, subdivided into five tableaux, and unlike the operas of Moussorgsky it has a self-contained overture which consists of a development of the themes subsequently associated respectively with Ivan, Toucha and Olga. The two

latter are recognisable as folk-songs, together with such numbers as Olga's song of the strawberry-picker, Toucha's to the cuckoo, Olga's prayer in the first *tableau* of Act I, the song of the rebels in the second *tableau* and the plaint of the citizens at the beginning of Act II. The penultimate and anti-penultimate are to be found in Palakireff's collection and are actually culled from the Government of Nijni-Novgorod. A feature of the work worthy of notice is the bell effect which accompanies the summoning of the citizens of the council. The actual bell, originally used, was, it has been stated, an object of mistrust to the censor, owing to the association of bells with political movements in Russia, and the orchestral imitation was therefore substituted. The Russian fondness for bells is a byword, and the characteristic has not escaped the attention of composers, some of whom have succeeded—Borodin and Moussorgsky, for instance—in reproducing the bell-sound with extraordinary realism.\*

Rimsky-Korsakoff does not seem to have been very much at home in employing the *mezzo-recitative* in "Pskovitianka," and it is somewhat dry in character. But his harmonic colouring, his fine choruses and his brilliant orchestration unite in rendering this work a very notable first venture in the theatre. It was completed in 1872 and was given its first performance at the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, on January 1, 1873. Accounts vary as to its reception. It is recorded that exception was taken to certain "audacious" harmonic innovations—a judgment which begins

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\* The latest employment of bell-effect by a Russian composer is in one of Stravinsky's songs.

to sound somewhat familiar! That "Pskovitianka" was given sixteen performances might really be considered to suggest that it was not an unpopular work, but its subsequent treatment—it was neglected until as long after as 1895—hardly bears out the theory. It was revived by a musical society in St Petersburg and performed at the Panaieff Theatre, having been revised and much improved by the composer for this occasion.

In 1871 Rimsky-Korsakoff accepted the invitation of Asanchevsky, whose name will be recalled as belonging to one of Moussorgsky's earliest musical acquaintances—now at the head of the conservatorium at St. Petersburg—to join the staff of that institution, and he was appointed professor of composition and orchestration

It was at this time that he and Moussorgsky established themselves under one roof. While living together they actually worked at the same table upon "Pskovitianka" and "Khovantchina" respectively. They were further engaged during the winter of 1871-2 on their appointed contributions to the joint "Mlada" production—a commission shared by them with Cui and Borodin. This finished, Rimsky-Korsakoff, already displaying a superior talent for orchestration, took in hand Dargomijsky's "Stone-Guest."

Rimsky-Korsakoff seems in a measure to have been a victim to that same hesitation in the choice of a mould for his symphonic works as has been noted in connection with his operas. His first symphony was written entirely on classical lines—likewise his third. But the work which we have now to mention, "Antar" (Op. 9), he called a symphonic suite, adding a sub-

title, "Second Symphony." In reality, it is a symphonic picture in four sections. "Antar," scored for full orchestra, is a remarkably fine piece of descriptive music. Its "programme," which prefaces the score is derived from an Arab story by Sennkovsky. The work is dedicated to Cui, and as the composer-critic wrote a notice upon it (in 1886) in which the scheme is set forth, we propose to quote his article.

"The subject," wrote Cui, "is taken from an oriental tale. Antar, weary of human ingratitude, retires into the desert. Suddenly there appears a gazelle fleeing from a gigantic bird. Antar kills the monster, saves the gazelle, falls asleep and is transported in his dreams to a magnificent palace where he is captivated by charming songs and dances; the fairy\* who dwells in the palace promises him the three greatest joys of life. Awakening from his dream he finds himself back in the desert. This is the programme of the first part. It is an admirable specimen of descriptive music. The sombre chords depicting the desert, the graceful gazelle's race for life, the cumbrous flight of the winged monster, expressed by sinister harmonies [*sic*] finally the dances full of voluptuous abandon, all give evidence of abundant inspiration. Only in the dances, the subject is too short for their length and is thus repeated too often. The second part, the joy of vengeance, is full of barbaric energy, of bloodthirsty violence which characterises alike the music and its orchestration. The third part, the joy of power, consists of a glittering oriental march ornamented with arabesques both novel and charming. The last part,

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\* The fairy Gul-Nazar turns out to be the gazelle transformed.

the joy of love, is the culminating point of the work. The poetry of passion is wonderfully rendered in terms of music. Two more observations in reference to 'Antar.' In order to enhance the appeal of local colour Korsakoff makes use of three Arab themes and the symphony is invested with a considerable cohesion by the circumstance that despite the dissimilarity in character of the four sections the 'Antar' theme has been introduced into each."

We come now to the epoch in Rimsky-Korsakoff's career at which after having given indisputable proofs of his genius in the domain of operatic and symphonic art and having written twenty-two songs, some of which are among the best to be found in the Russian treasury of vocal music, he began to feel that his technical knowledge and equipment were insufficient. To account for this more or less sudden realisation does not seem difficult if it be borne in mind that he had recently begun to teach, and it is not unlikely that it was the need for a more facile instrument of instruction rather than an improved medium of expression which was so strongly felt. Whatever the cause the result may be traced in the output of Rimsky-Korsakoff at this time, such as the six variations on the theme "B-a-c-h" for piano and the six fugues, Op. 17, written during the period of self-tutorial discipline. These works were composed when their creator was immersed in text-books which must obviously have emanated from a western source. His own native style got the upper hand only when he wrote as a result of direct inspiration.

Five years after this resolve was made, Tchaikovsky, writing to Mme von Meck, describes, in terms of

the Tchaikovskian point of view, the state of mind which prompted it. "I possess a letter dating from that time which moved me very deeply. Rimsky-Korsakoff was overcome by despair when he realised how many unprofitable years he had wasted, and that he was following a road which led nowhere. He began to study with such zeal that the theory of the schools soon became to him an indispensable atmosphere. During one summer he achieved innumerable exercises in counterpoint and sixty-four fugues, ten of which he sent me for inspection. From contempt of the schools, Rimsky-Korsakoff suddenly went over to the cult of musical technique. . . . At present (1877) he appears to be passing through a crisis, and it is hard to predict how it will end."

In an earlier letter to Rimsky-Korsakoff himself (in 1875) Tchaikovsky wrote: "You must know how I admire and bow down before your artistic modesty and your great strength of character! These innumerable counterpoints, these sixty fugues, and all the other musical intricacies which you have accomplished—all these things from a man who had already produced a "Sadko" eight years previously—are the exploits of a hero. . . . How small, poor, self-satisfied and naive I feel in comparison with you! I am a mere *artisan* in composition, but you will be an *artist*, in the fullest sense of the word. . . . I am really convinced that with your immense gifts—and the ideal conscientiousness with which you approach your work—you will produce music that must far surpass all which so far has been composed in Russia. I await your ten fugues with keen impatience. . . ."

A composition which proves that Tchaikovsky's

fears, expressed in the first quoted of these letters, were not by any means groundless, is the string quartet (Op. 12) written for a competition organised by the Imperial Society of Music. This, a singularly dull work, seems quite obviously to have been composed as an exercise in classic style. It contains no feature which would suggest that it was written by a master in whose work brilliancy of effect was so consistent.

In 1873 Rimsky-Korsakoff decided finally to sever his connection with the Navy. It seems a little curious that his professorship, already held for two years, should not sooner have rendered this resignation imperative. And if we should search for an odder or more incongruous combination than Moussorgsky the guardsman and liberator of opera, it is surely upon the figure of the naval officer attending the conservatorium as instructor in musical theoretics that our choice would fall. It is to be presumed that it was not with the object of creating a precedential alliance between the arts of war and peace that the Grand Duke Constantin Nicholaevich obtained for Korsakoff the post of Inspector of Naval Bands, but rather as a means of supplementing a somewhat depleted income. This inspectorship was held by the composer until 1884.

The year under review also saw the beginning of the fine collection of folk-songs (Op. 24), which were published in 1877. Rimsky-Korsakoff was not long in putting some of these tunes to a thematic use. In the "Sinfonietta on Russian Themes" (Op. 31), which is in three movements, he employed no less than five of them. Others appear in the works of Moussorgsky and Tchaikovsky, both of whom contributed to the collection. The third symphony (Op. 32), in four



movements (*moderato assai*, *scherzo*, *andante*, leading to *allegro con spirito*) in which the composer is seen favouring the "old and archaic musical forms," and the symphonic tale (Op. 20) based on the prologue from Pushkin's "Russlan and Ludmilla," both belong to this year which saw the production of "Pskovitianka."

But there was an event of at least equal importance to those already chronicled which rendered the year 1872 a notable epoch in Rimsky-Korsakoff's career. This was his marriage with Nadejda Pourgold. The name of Pourgold soon becomes familiar to the student of Russian musical history. Alexandra Pourgold, who became Mme. Molas, was a singer possessing quite exceptional powers of artistic perceptivity. She was a pupil of Dargomyjsky, and almost invariably undertook the female characters in those operas, which like "Boris Godounoff," received "scratch" performances at the periodical gatherings of the "five" and their friends. As for the lady who became the wife of Rimsky-Korsakoff, one can but surmise that the suitability of the union can hardly have been the subject of any doubt on the part of those who knew the couple. In 1868 we find Nadejda Nicholaïevna as "orchestra" (at the piano) in the parlour performance of "Boris." In 1871 she is asserting her judgment in advising the modification of certain chords in Tchaïkovsky's "Romeo and Juliet" overture—submitted for the approval of Balakireff who took a great interest in this work—a suggestion of which Tchaïkovsky readily availed himself. In the winter of 1872-3 her offer to make a piano arrangement of the finale of the Malo-Russian symphony, is accepted with enthusiasm and it is to her that Borodin dedicated his first string quar-

tet which he finished in 1878, surely a tribute unique in the history of Woman! She also assisted in the reduction of Borodin's "Prince Igor," and has since lent similar aid to her husband.

In 1874 Balakireff relinquished his post as conductor of the Free School concerts and was succeeded by Rimsky-Korsakoff, who filled the position until 1881. He appears at this time to have combined the study of musical theory with the formation of certain operatic plans, an odd enough mixture of occupations from the academic point of view. A letter written by Borodin in 1875 shows the attitude of the writer towards his colleague's industry. Borodin, reporting general progress, speaks of the operatic activity of Cui and Moussorgsky; "Rimsky-Korsakoff," he continues, "is working for the Free School, he writes counterpoint and teaches his pupils all kinds of musical devices. He is writing a monumental course of instrumentation which will be without a rival, but he, also, has no leisure and has abandoned his work. . . . Many people have been distressed to see Korsakoff take a retrograde step and give himself up to the study of musical archæology. For myself I quite understand it, and it does not trouble me."

1877 saw the publication of the first collection of folk-songs and is the date of Rimsky-Korsakoff's contribution to the "Paraphrases" or "Chopsticks" suite devised by Borodin. The "work" referred to by Borodin in the above-quoted letter is doubtless Rimsky-Korsakoff's second opera, "A Night in May," finished in 1878. For its subject he went to one of Gogol's fantastically humorous tales which were written at the suggestion of Pushkin. As will be seen the

character of the story involved a complete change of sentiment, the subject calling for something far removed from the stern realism of "Pskovitianka," and the composer almost wholly forsaking the declamatory method introduced a note of brightness and of humour which was well and clearly sounded in a fund of melody and lyricism. The story concerns a headman of a lakeside village, his son Levko, who is in love with Ganna, a village maiden, and a haunted house to which a legend attaches. The headman is also making advances to Ganna, and Levko, who has just made up his mind to solicit his father's consent to his marriage, is so disgusted on hearing of the parental plans that he determines to give his father a shock, and organises a sort of riotous orgy during which the headman's house is bombarded. In the confusion the headman, under the impression that he has caught one of the miscreants, locks up his sister-in-law, and other ridiculous mistakes are made. Levko gets into touch with the russalka who frequents the haunted house, and when he succeeds in rendering her a service, she gives him a written request to his father that the hoped-for match shall be sanctioned. Her handwriting is taken for that of the commissary and Levko and Ganna are made happy. This is but the bare outline of a somewhat complicated libretto into which the element of the supernatural enters very largely. The legend of the haunted house allows the introduction of a beautiful chorus of russalki. The work is not, however, entirely comic in character, and as a contrast to the fantastic element in the second act the music of the first is couched in a vein of tender melancholy. In this opera Rimsky-Korsakoff's delicate and caprici-

ous humour is fully displayed as well it might be in the musical interpretation of such a master as Gogol. "A Night in May," which is in three acts was produced at the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, in January, 1880, and was revived in October, 1894. It is dedicated to the composer's wife.

Rimsky-Korsakoff's next important venture was a further opera, begun in the summer of 1880. The "Snow-Maiden" (*Snegóurochka*), which is to be classified as a melodic opera, impresses one with the intensity of its composer's love of nature and his earnest observation of its various phenomena. It is clear that the rustic surroundings of his youth must have engendered something more than a desire to picture the people in song, for in "The Snow-Maiden" we are face to face with a thoroughly poetic presentation of what may be called their background. The text of this opera is drawn from a piece by one of the greatest Russian dramatists, Ostrovsky, who at the bidding of the directorate of the Great Theatre, Moscow, in 1873, forsook the sphere in which he had achieved fame—that of satirical comedy with the Muscovite bourgeoisie as subject—and undertook to write a fairy piece on the subject of "Spring." His musical collaborator was Tchaikovsky, who completed his contribution in two months. Tchaikovsky was about to revise his work in order to reconstruct it as an opera proper, when Rimsky-Korsakoff, in response to an invitation from the Imperial Theatre, brought forward his own completed operatic setting of the same text.

The story which is derived from folk-tale is as follows: Its scene is the neighbourhood of Berendey during early spring. The "Snow-Maiden" is the off-

spring of an attachment between the Fairy Spring and Old Winter, dating from sixteen years prior to the opening of the story. Old Winter realises the danger which would arise from the exposure of his daughter to the power of his perpetual enemy the Sun God. The Fairy Spring has, however, an excessive maternal pride in the delicate beauty of her child, the Snow-Maiden, now entering womanhood, and allows her to roam about unchecked. The mother, noticing that her daughter is apparently incapable of passion or any warmth of feeling owing to the snow which fills her veins, endows her with the missing attributes. But no sooner has the Snow-Maiden made choice of a lover than the warm June sun pierces her unsubstantial frame and, becoming deliquescent, she floats to heaven in a vapour.

For the four acts and prologue the composer has found an ample fund of incident and interest in the legend, and the beliefs of pagan Russia, which are referred to from time to time in its pages, help to create an atmosphere of nationality. There is quite a host of accessory characters; birds, flowers, nobles and their wives, the Czar's suite, players of the *guslee*, the rebec and the pipe, blind men, buffoons, shepherds, youths and maidens and Perendeys "of every class" all helping to make a striking pictorial effect. As for the scenery, its description in the score is sufficient to suggest that, from a man of Rimsky-Korsakoff's wealth of imagination, it could not do less than evoke music which would fulfil all the needs of the picturesque legend of spring. The song and dance of the birds in the prologue, the songs of the shepherd Lel (who personifies Russian folk-lore), the prelude to the third

act and certain of the folk-song choruses are specimens of Rimsky-Korsakoff's inspiration at its zenith. The composer makes good use of his themes but avoids Wagnerian persistence, relying on a melodic presentation when making a psychological or personal reference. Certain directions in the score reveal that the composer, following the tradition set up by his school, had become a stickler for thoroughness of production and they enforce a scrupulous regard for the niceties of stage management. "During the performance of the lyrical pieces in this opera," he admonishes his producers, "those who have to remain silent on the stage are requested not to distract the public attention from the singing by an excessive play of gesture." He further insists that there must be no cuts. The "Snow-Maiden" received its first performance in 1882 at the Imperial Theatre, St. Petersburg, the proceeds being reserved for the chorus of that establishment. A special French edition was prepared for its production at the Opéra-Comique, Paris, in 1908.

In 1882 Rimsky-Korsakoff published a second collection of folk-songs and then spent some little time in the editing of Moussorgsky's two operas, of which labour enough has already been said. In 1883 he was appointed assistant director of the Imperial Chapel, St. Petersburg, a post held by him for eleven years. The third symphony was revised in 1884.

A year later he received an invitation from Tchaikovsky to take over the directorship of the Conservatorium in Moscow, an office filled by Nicholas Rubinstein from its foundation in 1864 until his death in 1881. Tchaikovsky, writing primarily to prepare Rimsky-Korsakoff for a somewhat over-critical revision of

the latter's harmony guide, then under process of compilation, adds: "Now I am going to lay a serious question before you which you need not answer at once, only after due consideration and discussion with your wife. Dare I hope that you would accept the position of director of the Moscow Conservatoire . . . . Your upright and ideally honourable character, your distinguished gifts, both as artist and teacher, warrant my conviction that in you we should find a splendid director. . . . Think it over and send me your answer." This offer was declined, and the directorship was, after a lapse of time, offered to S. I. Taneieff, who was succeeded in 1889 by Safonoff.

In 1885, M. P. Belaieff, the patriotic publisher, founded the organisation known as the Russian Symphony Concerts, for the performance of native compositions, and in the following year Rimsky-Korsakoff accepted the conductorship. About this time he contributed the opening allegro to the string quartet jointly composed in honour of the "Russian Maecenas," Belaieff, by Borodin, Liadoff, Glazounoff and himself. His piano concerto in three movements (Op. 30, C sharp minor), dedicated to Liszt, was also published in 1886.

On the death of Borodin in 1887, he undertook the revision and completion of the works left by his friend, a task in which he was assisted by Glazounoff. The opera, "Prince Igor," the fragmentary third symphony, the second string quartet and some songs were eventually published by Belaieff.

In the same year he completed that "colossal masterpiece of instrumentation,"\* the *Capriccio Espagnole*

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\* Tchaikovsky.

(Op. 34), for "grand" orchestra, which has since attained a general popularity. This work is divided into five movements, thus arranged: (*a*) Alborada, Variazioni, Alborada, (*b*) Scene e canto gitano, (*c*) Fandango asturiano. It is thoroughly Spanish in character, brilliantly scored, contains some epoch-making combinations of instruments—that of drums, tambourine and cymbals, with the rest silent, following the violin cadenza in the fourth movement is sufficiently uncommon—and is a monument to the composer's remarkable *flair* for orchestral colour. The "Capriccio" was first performed on October 31, 1887, by the orchestra of the Imperial Opera, St. Petersburg, the composer conducting, and the score which was published in the following year was dedicated to this body; its title page bears a picturesque design introducing certain Spanish emblems which decorate a pillar bearing the names of the whole orchestra. The violin fantasia on Russian themes, chief among which is that numbered seven in Balakireff's collection,\* belongs to this period.

Another orchestral work which now enjoys an equal esteem and an enhanced popularity, by reason of its adoption as the basis of one of the items in the Russian ballet repertoire, was composed soon after the "Capriccio Espagnole." "Scheherazade" (Op. 35) is a symphonic suite in four movements, written to a "programme," based on stories from the "Arabian Nights." The "plot" affixed to the score is narrated in the following terms by the composer himself. "The Sultan Schahriar, impelled to the belief that all women

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\* A variant will be found in the collection of Prokunin.



are false by nature, had sworn to put each of his successive wives to death on the morrow of the nuptials. But the Sultana Scheherazade saved herself by exciting his interest in the tales she told him during a thousand and one nights. Driven by curiosity, the Sultan deferred his wife's execution from day to day until finally he revoked his slaughterous resolve. Many wonders were narrated to Schahriar by the Sultana Scheherazade. For her tales, the Sultana borrowed from the poets—their verses, from popular songs—the words, and she intercalated the stories and the adventures one in another." The score is remarkable for certain successful experiments in instrumentation and also for the employment of the various instruments as soloists, which procedure might well be supposed to have arisen out of the composer's intense satisfaction at the first performance of the preceding work. The interpretation of his programme is carried out with all the power and resource which Rimsky-Korsakoff had at his disposal, and which, together with his penchant for the oriental, place him, in works of this class at least, far beyond his contemporaries—Balakireff himself not excepted.

That the purely symphonic was exerting a fascination upon the composer at this time is suggested by the appearance, shortly after "Scheherazade" of the "Easter" overture (Op. 36) which is based on Russian church tunes. This work, like "Scheherazade," is written to a definite programme—one, however, of a very different character. Its purport is explained by two biblical quotations, one from Psalm LXVIII, and the other from Chapter XV of St. Mark, which preface the score. Again there is an exceeding brilliance of

orchestration, and the use of bell effects which accompany the appearance of the Easter hymn is at once characteristic, appropriate and masterly.

In 1889 Rimsky-Korsakoff appeared in Paris and conducted two concerts, consisting of Russian music, at the Trocadero under the auspices of the International Exhibition, and in the following year, in response to an invitation from the executive of the "Concerts populaires," travelled for the same purpose to Brussels—the scene of his labours being the Théâtre de la Monnaie. The composer was enthusiastically received and entertained at a banquet at which a special reference was made to the efforts of the Countess Mercy-Argenteau, who, as we know, had worked untiringly on behalf of the cause of Russian music in Western Europe.

These tours abroad did not cause a cessation of Rimsky-Korsakoff's creative activities In 1889 he began a remarkable series of operatic works which flowed from his pen with extraordinary rapidity. Between 1870 and 1889, as we have seen, he composed but three operas. Between the last-named date and his death—a period of similar length—he completed no less than twelve. Of these the first was "Mlada." The origin of this work was the proposal of Guédéonoff to Borodin, Cui, Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff in the winter of 1871-2. The subject had doubtless "grown upon" Rimsky-Korsakoff in the meantime, for in addition to the section composed by him for the abortive production he had orchestrated Borodin's contribution, the last act. In "Mlada" he still favours the lyrical method, a condition imposed by the nature of the libretto which is that of Guédéonoff

"Mlada" is described as an "opera ballet," and is in four acts. Its performance demands an immense stage and the employment of a large and complicated cast which comprises a varied array of dramatic personages, mortal and supernatural. The second act calls for some ten auxiliaries, all of whom fulfil solo vocal rôles. In addition there are parts for a pantomimic artist and a solo danseuse, a chorus divided into small groups and certain imitative instruments in the orchestra, designed to relieve the usual functionaries of the onus of "stage noises" production.

The composer is not satisfied with his prefatory injunction that the privilege of imitating such elemental phenomena as thunder and wind is to remain with the orchestra, but finds it necessary to emphasise this decree at sundry meteorological moments in the score.

The action of "Mlada" takes place in the ninth or tenth century in the town of Rhétra near the river Laba and the Baltic coast, and introduces certain pagan customs, such as the worship of Peroun, the god of thunder, and other elemental deities which prevailed prior to the introduction of Christianity, then imminent. Mstivoi, Prince of Rhétra, has designs upon Arkonsk, and wishes to encompass the downfall of its ruler, Jaromir. To this end he seeks the union of Jaromir with his daughter, Voislava, and makes the latter, who is in love with Jaromir, his instrument, by causing her to present a poisoned ring to Jaromir's affianced bride at the wedding ceremony. At the opening of the opera Voislava anticipates the arrival of the bereaved Jaromir at her father's palace. Voislava, who has failed

to derive satisfaction from the worship of Lada, proceeds at the instigation of her nurse, Sviatokna, to invoke the infernal goddess, Morena, whose earthly shape is in fact that of the nurse herself. On Jaromir's arrival he quickly falls a victim to Voislava's charms, but sees, while sleeping, a vision of his wedding with Mlada, and perceives for the first time that it is none other than Voislava who is responsible for the death of his bride. On awaking, however, his newly-kindled passion is still ablaze and Mstivoi's scheme seems likely to bear fruit, until at the moment when the lovers are about to embrace, the shade of Mlada persistently intervenes and ultimately carries off Jaromir. On his return to earth the disillusioned lover kills the perfidious Voislava, who is claimed by Morena as her part of the bargain between them, and the final curtain falls on the benediction of Mlada and Jaromir by the goddess Lada.

In "Mlada" Rimsky-Korsakoff again makes a judicious use of the leitmotiv and nowhere employs it more effectively than in the intervention of Mlada's shade when the chorus is urging Jaromir to embrace Voislava. There is some very beautiful music in the dream of Jaromir and some exceedingly characteristic passages occur in the second act when the merchants are crying their wares in the market—a device again used in a somewhat different fashion in a later opera. Here the composer introduces an Eastern element in the shape of a "cadenza" which embodies the cry of the Moorish merchant. A further Oriental episode is that in which the Queen Cleopatra figures. Some fine spectacular music occurs in the third act, depicting

"Night on Mount Triglav,"\* which is the scene of Moussorgsky's "Bare Mountain" (the final shape of his third act in the Guédéonoff version) and in which are seen a number of mythical and legendary beings, such as Tchernobog, the black god, and Kostchei, the man-skeleton. From this act the composer afterwards drew the material for a "symphonic picture." The "Redova" dance in the first act must also be mentioned as one of the choicer numbers in a score which is quite one of Rimsky-Korsakoff's richest works. "Mlada" was produced in November, 1892.

In 1894 Rimsky-Korsakoff relinquished the assistantship of the Imperial Chapel, a step which doubtless contributed to his subsequent activity in operatic composition. He was now at work upon an opera in which the element of humour is more pronounced than in any other from his pen. The subject of "Christmas Eve Revels" is taken from one of the fantastic "Stories of Mirgorod," by Gogol, who wrote them at the suggestion of Pushkin. In 1873 the subject had been chosen for a competition inaugurated by the Grand Duchess Helena Pavlovna, who had previously commissioned Polonsky, a well-known poet, to prepare a libretto for Seroff.

Tchaikovsky was the successful competitor. His opera, originally named "Vakoula the Smith," was given a mixed reception at St. Petersburg in 1876, and having undergone revision and two changes of name was successfully produced at Moscow as "Oxana's Caprice" in 1887. The attractiveness of Gogol's story is evidenced by the fact that it has been treated by

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\* Triglav was a three-headed god.

no less than five composers—the others being Solovieff, Stchourovsky and Lissenko. The libretto of Rimsky-Korsakoff's work was of his own writing. The "plot" deals with the machinations of a witch called Solokha in partnership with the Devil. The scene is the village of Dikanka on a moon-lit Christmas eve. The Devil bears a grudge against Vakoula the smith, because the latter has portrayed the satanic features on the wall of the village church. Vakoula is going to visit his lady-love Oxana, the daughter of the Cossack Choub, and the last-named is engaged to sup with the sacristan. The Devil's revenge upon his caricaturist is wrought by means of the theft of the moon and stars. The resultant darkness brings about a fearful confusion. Choub loses his way and missing the sacristan's abode comes back in a circle to his own, only to be refused admission by Vakoula, who assumes that he must be a rival for the hand of Oxana. Further complications ensue in which the village headman is involved, but eventually the moon is replaced. Oxana, who has hitherto rejected Vakoula's suit, promises half in jest to marry him if he will bring her the shoes of the Tsaritsa. Vakoula getting the upper hand of the Devil, exacts from him a promise to obtain an interview with the Tsaritsa, and the latter being in a pleasant mood, allows him to carry off the shoes which are duly presented to the now relenting Oxana.

Rimsky-Korsakoff's score occupies itself with emphasising the humorous and fantastic in Gogol's story, thus differing from Tchaikovsky's lyrical treatment of the subject. The former composer possessed qualities which enabled him better to appreciate the subtle kinds of humour; the latter appears to have been

sensible only to the more obvious and superficial. Rimsky-Korsakoff gave variety to the work by introducing a reference to the sacred aspect of Christmas; the overture is built upon two themes of a character which leaves no doubt as to the composer's intention.

"Christmas Eve Revels" is in four acts, subdivided into nine *tableaux*. It was produced at the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, in 1895, but remained only a short time in the repertoire, thus sharing the fate of several other Russian operatic works of distinction.

The year 1896 is noteworthy for the celebration of Rimsky-Korsakoff's twenty-fifth year of work as professor at the Conservatoire.

His next opera, on which he had been working since 1895, was produced in 1897. There has already been occasion briefly to refer to its subject in speaking of the symphonic picture, "Sadko," composed in 1867. Rimsky-Korsakoff drew from his operas, "The Snow-Maiden," "Mlada," "Christmas Eve" and "Tsar Saltan," the material for orchestral suites. Here he reverses the process and elaborates the scheme of a symphonic work to build up an opera. In "Sadko" the declamatory style of vocalisation is given somewhat wider scope and the melodic element is less noticeable. Cheshikin, who discusses at length the question of Rimsky-Korsakoff's variation of methods, hints that the composer's hesitation with respect to the basic principles of operatic construction might have been assumed to be at an end with "Sadko," which is a thoroughly well-balanced and at the same time a highly original work. This, as we shall see, was not so.

"Sadko" is very rich in material of the historical as well as of the legendary kind. The minstrel-hero

lived in the eleventh century, and records of his actions are to be seen in the "Cycle of Novgorod," the third or the five series of "tales of the olden times" (buiim) and in various folk-songs. The cycle of Novgorod, which is divided into two legends, deals with merchants, pilgrims and town-builders. Sadko has a story to himself. It runs as follows:

At Novgorod dwelt a poor minstrel who earned a precarious livelihood by performing on his *guslee* to the rich men of the city. One day at a banquet he had the misfortune to annoy those present by reproaching them with their love of wealth, and was unceremoniously bundled out. Hurt by this treatment, he betook himself one lovely summer's evening to the banks of Lake Ilmen, and sang his woes to its waves. Attracted by the music, the beautiful Volkhova, youngest daughter of the Ocean Monarch, emerged from the water, surrounded by her suite of maidens. Enchanted both by the beauty and talent of Sadko, Volkhova promised that they should meet again, when riches and happiness would become his lot. She instructed him to cast his nets in the lake waters and assured him that he would draw golden fish from them in sufficient abundance to enable him to travel the world over. Sadko, overwhelmed with joy, returned to the town and wagered his head against the wealth of the merchants that he would catch golden fish in Lake Ilmen. Volkhova fulfilled her promise, but Sadko, unwilling to profit to the full extent, was satisfied with a fleet of thirty vessels with which he set sail for a long voyage. One evening in mid-ocean his ship suddenly came to a standstill and its sails were torn from its masts. In order to propitiate the



Sea-King casks of gold and precious stones were pitched into the waves. This proving of no avail, it was assumed that the king required a human sacrifice. Lots were drawn and Sadko, who had already guessed that Volkhova's hand was directing these circumstances, was placed on a plank and drawn down to the Sea-King's domain. Entranced by Sadko's glorification, sung in his honour, the King bestowed his youngest daughter, Volkhova, upon the minstrel. The betrothal was celebrated with submarine pomp and circumstance. Sadko then began anew to play and sing, but his music rose to such a high emotional pitch that the whole company joined in with a frenzied dance. This caused a storm and many ships were wrecked. Suddenly St. Nicholas appeared, and remonstrating with Sadko, dashed his *guslee* to the ground, thus putting an end to the dance and to its attendant storm. He bade the minstrel return to his home and transformed Volkhova into the river that flows by the city of Novgorod.

In this opera, Rimsky-Korsakoff adopts a method of recitative which lends itself to the narration of legendary lore, but he indulges his gift for melody in many charming songs and dances, and gives scope to his *flair* for the picturesque by introducing a series of solos for three oversea merchants, demanded by Sadko as a musical acknowledgment of his clemency in renouncing the greater part of the booty won in his wager. Quite a feature of the opera is the wonderful variety of rhythm, one of the most original specimens being the song of Niejata, a minstrel from Kiev, in which the rhythms of 6-4 and 9-4 appear in alternate bars. Among the many beautiful numbers in the score may be mentioned the procession of maidens (the King's

daughters) and every kind of marine marvels in the penultimate *tableau* (there are seven), and Volkhova's slumber-song in the last.

< The instrumentation is novel and effective, the *guslee* music being rendered by a combination of piano and harp. Several themes from the symphonic "Sadko" are employed in the opera. \

The directorate of the St. Petersburg Imperial Opera, to whom the work was duly submitted, was somewhat disconcerted by its originality, and refused to produce it. Luckily for the composer and for the musical public, there had lately been inaugurated, in Moscow, an operatic organisation supported by private funds, and under these auspices "Sadko" was staged with such success that the Imperial Opera authorities were obliged, in 1901, to reverse their decision, and the work has since been performed wherever possible in Russia.

Rimsky-Korsakoff was naturally nettled by this action and determined never again to submit his work to this body. In 1899 he addressed a letter to a Russian musical journal in which he voiced the complaint that whereas native composers were obliged to present their works when soliciting performance, foreigners were not thus penalised. He also referred to the performing fees paid to foreign composers and their representatives, which he characterised, in view of the absence of an understanding with other European countries in the matter of "rights," as an act of pure generosity, and recommended to the authorities the nationalisation of such benevolence.

In 1898 he was already faced with the problem of placing a fresh opera. "The Tsar's Betrothed" is founded on a drama by Mey, but contains some sup-

plementary material from the pen of Tumeneff. Its subject is the same as that of an abortive operatic essay by Borodin begun in the 'sixties. It relates to a custom obtaining in the time of Ivan the Terrible—that of selecting an Imperial bride. Ivan's choice falls upon Martha, who is already loved by Griaznoi, an officer. Griaznoi devises the plan of giving Martha a potion which will efface the memory of a further claimant, Lykoff. But the officer does not reckon with his discarded mistress, Liuba, who replaces the potion with another which robs Martha of her beauty. Griaznoi stabs Liuba and gives himself up to justice. This work, which is in four acts, is the only one in which, musically speaking, the composer comes West. The subject is of course purely national, but the treatment in general is of a kind which savours of Mozart and of the Italian manner. Of operas already mentioned, "Pskovitanka" and "A Night in May," have long overtures in the traditional pattern. The "Holy Night" introduction to "Christmas Eve Revels," which serves as preludial matter, contains but fifty bars; that of "The Tsar's Betrothed" is more than six times as long, has some half-dozen changes of key-signature and is fitted with a "concert-ending." The opera is divided into the conventional operatic divisions: arias, duets, trios and quartets, and the chorus-work emphasises the "occidental" quality of the score. "The Tsar's Betrothed" was produced at the Moscow Private Opera on October 22, 1899, with very pronounced success and two years later at the Maryinsky Theatre. The taste of the larger Russian public was betrayed by this reception—it retained in a considerable measure what Cheshikin calls its "Italianomania" and a com-

bination of Russian subject and Italian manner must still have been at even so late a date the approved ingredients of operatic success.

As has been seen, Rimsky-Korsakoff, since his first operatic work, "Pskovitianka," had forsaken the declamatory method. In "Mozart and Salieri," however, he adopted a procedure which reminds us of Dargomijsky, to whose memory it was dedicated, and his "Stone-Guest." It seems as though Rimsky-Korsakoff, after wandering in search of a solution of the problem of operatic construction, had determined on returning, as it were, to the fold "Mozart and Salieri," a "dramatic duologue" by Pushkin, is set from end to end to the unaltered text, and in these "dramatic scenes" of Rimsky-Korsakoff—a title replacing that of "opera"—the melodic recitative is maintained unbroken. The dramatic substance concerns itself with the supposition that Mozart's death was caused by poison administered to him by his southern rival, and refers to the mysterious stranger—the emissary of that "musical ghoul," Count Walsegg—who in the last year of Mozart's life commissioned the "Requiem." "Mozart and Salieri" is in two scenes. In the first are seen the two composers and an old fiddler who has been brought to Mozart's house by his rival. Salieri is piqued by Mozart's merriment at the old man's expense, but when the master plays, Salieri, always impressionable, compares him with God. Mozart declares in jest that "God is hungry" and Salieri invites him to dine at a restaurant. While Mozart is informing his wife of his proposed absence from the domestic table, Salieri decides to poison him.

The second scene takes place at the restaurant. As

an explanation of a somewhat morose mood, Mozart mentions the stranger who haunts him. Salieri quotes Peaumarchais's words to the effect that champagne is the best remedy for low spirits. Mozart then inquires as to the truth of the story that the author of "Figaro" poisoned someone, and asserts his belief that a genius would be incapable of murder. Salieri, in course of conversation, finds an opportunity to introduce some poison into Mozart's glass, and the latter, after an attempt to render his "Requiem" at the piano, is overcome by the effect of the potion. Salieri, pondering the question as to the incompatibility of genius and murderous instincts, is plunged into despair at this apparent reflection upon the quality of his own capacities.

The score introduces several imitative references to the musical matter of the text, such as Salieri's mention of a simple scale and an allusion to an organ, which evokes a pedal-point. Rimsky-Korsakoff adheres as far as possible to the style of the Mozart period.

"Mozart and Salieri" was produced at the Solodovnikoff Theatre, Moscow, in 1898. It was the first opera in which the subject was not nationalistic, but this cannot be looked upon as a serious lapse from the composer's ideal, seeing that its literary material was derived from the greatest figure in the history of Russian literature.

The declamatory style was again predominant in Rimsky-Korsakoff's next work, but this is not necessarily to be regarded as the result of a preference engendered by the composer's artistic state of mind. "Boyárina Vera Scheloga" is a prologue to "Pskoviti-anka" and treats of the incident contributory to the

literary substance of the earlier work. It will thus be recognised that the consideration of homogeneity of style would have a strong claim in the selection of method. "Boyárina Vera Scheloga" is in one act. Its story, like that of "Pskovitianka," is taken from Meÿs drama, but it deals with a period fifteen years anterior to the first episodes in the plot of "Pskovitianka." In the second act of the last-named work there is a passage which gives the key to the dramatic situation in this prologue. When Ivan the Terrible questions Prince Tokmakoff as to the antecedents of Olga, his adopted daughter, the Prince explains that Olga is the child of his wife's sister by someone unknown, and that his wife, then his betrothed, took upon her own shoulders the onus of the indiscretion. Scheloga, still suspecting his own wife, Vera, left for the war and sought a soldier's end. Olga the child has since remained under the Prince's protection.

The scene of the prologue is Scheloga's house at Pskoff in 1555. Scheloga is absent at the war with his friend Tokmakoff. The voice of Vera his wife is heard singing her infant daughter Olga to sleep; Nadejda Nasónoff, her sister, endeavours to ascertain the identity of Vera's lover. She replies that she has never dared to breathe his name even in prayer, but she relates the circumstances of her betrayal. During her husband's absence at the war a number of troops returned to Pskoff with the Tsar at their head. On her way to the Pechirsky monastery, for devotional purposes, she lost herself and fainted from fatigue. Regaining consciousness, she found herself in the tent of a stranger, who gave orders for her to be taken home. The same evening the stranger sought an in-

terview, during which Vera allowed herself to become his victim. Soon after this explanation is vouchsafed, Scheloga and Tokmakoff arrive. Vera has now conceived a strong aversion for her husband, and beseeches him to leave her. To his inquiry respecting the origin of the child, Nadejda makes the false avowal of motherhood. Those familiar with the action of "Pskovitianka" will have known that the betrayer was none other than Ivan the Terrible himself, and that eventually, on recognising Olga as his own child, he strove to make reparation. "Boyárina Vera Scheloga" was produced at the Private Opera, Moscow, in 1899, fulfilling at this performance its function of prologue to "Pskovitianka." Three years later it was given at the Maryinsky Theatre.

No sooner were the two works, "Boyárina Vera Scheloga" and "The Tsar's Betrothed," fairly launched than Rimsky-Korsakoff came forward with "The Tale of Tsar Saltan," an opera in the melo-declamatory style which, by virtue of its subject, its manner and its quality, is comparable with "Sadko." "The Tale of Tsar Saltan" is a popular Russian folk-story, but is to be found in the lore of other nations. The immediate source of Rimsky-Korsakoff's libretto, which was made by Belsky, is Pushkin's version of the story and in some portions of the text the original lines are preserved.

Certain quotations from Pushkin figure in the score. The tale, as told in the opera, is as follows:

The young Tsar Saltan, whose beauty was a byword among his subjects and who was in the habit of wandering forth at dusk in search of a closer knowledge of his capital, overheard one evening the conversation

of three sisters, daughters of a rich merchant. They were exchanging views as to their ideals of worldly happiness. With each the one desideratum was marriage with the Tsar. Should that come to pass, said the eldest, she would bake him bread from the finest flour in the world. The second would weave him such linen as ne'er yet had been seen. The third, whose acquired accomplishments were few, would, however perform prodigious feats in the domain of motherhood. She would bear the sovereign seven hero-sons that should be the comeliest in his kingdom. Saltan, indifferent to the prospect of food and raiment, of which he was little in need, was attracted by the promise of such proud fatherhood, and within three days he married the youngest sister. Shortly after the nuptials Saltan was obliged to absent himself at the wars, and in order that his bride should not be lonely he sent for the two spinster sisters to live with her. They were consumed with jealousy which, however, they dissembled with more or less success. During the Tsar's absence a son was born to the Tsaritsa. A message was concocted and sent to the Tsar by the wicked sisters, in league with a witch (Babaricha), to the effect that his young wife had given birth "neither to a son nor a daughter, not to kittens, mice or frogs, but to a sort of monstrous animal," and a message was brought in return that the mother and her offspring should be confined in a cask and dropped into the sea. Mother and son drifted to the island of Bouyan, where the young Tsarevitch Guidon developed into a vigorous hero. A swan whom he saved, with his bow and arrow, from a pursuing kite, initiated him into the arts of magic, and he was able to raise a wondrous city from



beneath the sea. By its people he was chosen Tsar. By means of his transformation into a bee, wrought by the swan, he followed some of the Saltan's vessels and saw his father. Returning to his own city, Guidon sighed for the joys of matrimony, and the swan gaining knowledge of this, took her proper shape as a lovely princess with the result that the happy pair soon after sought the Tsaritsa's benediction. The royal mother was not long left in loneliness. The fleet of Saltan was sighted, and husband and wife were reunited.

With such substance as this for his libretto, Rimsky-Korsakoff could hardly fail to produce the best results of which he was capable, and "The Tale of Tsar Saltan" contains in its many arias and ariosos some delightful music. These vocal pieces, it should be mentioned, are not divided off from the rest. Here again the composer dispenses with the overture and the preludial matter to each of the acts is quite brief, with the exception of that preceding the second act. This, together with the introductions to the first act and the final *tableau*, form the material of a symphonic suite, which received performance before the opera itself. The opera, which is in four acts and a prologue, subdivided into seven *tableaux*, was produced on October 21, 1900, at the Solodovnikoff Theatre, Moscow, and during the composer's lifetime was only played at this and the St. Petersburg Private Opera.

In this year, in which fell the thirty-fifth anniversary of the first Russian symphony, Rimsky-Korsakoff paid another visit to Brussels in order to conduct a Russian concert. The date also marks his retire-

ment from the conductorship of the Belaieff symphony concerts to which he had been appointed in 1886.

X A return to the declamatory style came in 1901, the composer having now arrived at the conviction that in this method alone lay the solution of the problem of the musico-dramatic art. Meÿ's drama, "Servilia," which served as literary basis for Rimsky-Korsakoff's opera of the same name, has a feature in common with "Mlada," for it introduces episodes related to the adoption of Christianity. The action of "Servilia" takes place in ancient Rome during the time of Nero, the actual date being given as A.D. 67.

Hyspo and Egnatius, both strong opponents of Christianity, decide to plot against the Tribune Valerius and five senators. Valerius is in love with Servilia, the daughter of the senator Soranus; she is inclined to accept Christianity. Soranus wishes his daughter to marry Trasea, but the latter, hearing of the understanding between Servilia and his adopted son Valerius, expresses a determination to retire in his favour. But Egnatius, the freedman of Soranus, who is also enamoured of Servilia, involves her father and Trasea in a conspiracy against Sophonius, the Prefect, making Servilia's submission the price of their safety. She is surprised by Egnatius at the house of a sooth-sayer whom she has come to consult with respect to the mysterious disappearance of Valerius, and on being importuned, repulses him with indignation. He leaves her, with the object of providing her with an opportunity for reflection, and she attempts flight, but is unable to obtain egress. She then invokes the aid of the Christian God whom she vows in future to worship. In the last act the conspirators are called before

the tribunal Trasea and Soranus are sentenced to banishment and Servilia is to be handed to Egnatius on payment of a ransom. Just as the judgment is delivered Valerius returns and in Nero's name breaks up the tribunal. Servilia announces in dismay that, presuming Valerius's death, she has renounced all earthly joys. The opera ends with the death of Servilia, Valerius's attempted suicide, frustrated by Trasea, and a general acclamation of the Christian Deity.

Apart from the resemblance to "Mozart and Salieri" arising from its declamatory tendency, "Servilia" has little in common with the earlier work. It has a large cast, the scheme of which permits, however, of the "doubling" of parts, numerous auxiliary characters, a chorus, and the inclusion of some dances such as that of warriors celebrating Minerva's victory over the Titans in Act I and the dance of Mænads in Act II brings it much nearer the category of the conventional opera than "Mozart and Salieri." While commending the use of modal themes, when referring to the religious interest, one is obliged to take exception to certain incongruities in the score, notably the music of the scene between Egnatius and Servilia in the house of Locusta the soothsayer.

In the spinning-song at the opening of Act II the composer becomes quite Mendelssohnian, and the naiveté of the passage in which Servilia avows her love for Valerius belongs neither to the century it is intended to depict nor to that in which it was written. Where heroic and barbaric colouring are needed success is achieved. There is some chromaticism which suggests the influence of Wagner which may else-

where be traced in Rimsky-Korsakoff's later work, but the employment of leitmotiv is by no means overdone "Servilia," which is in five acts, was produced at the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, on November 1, 1902, and two years later was mounted at the Moscow Private Theatre, which had now emerged from some financial difficulties. ~~The opera was not well received~~ This is attributable, according to Cheshikin, to the deficiencies of the libretto rather than to musical weakness. He takes exception to the over-hasty assumption of the veil, announced by Servilia at the moment of her lover's return, and he complains that as her mental conflict during the process of conversion is not revealed to the audience its result places too great a strain upon the imagination.

The Wagnerian influence already noticeable in "Servilia" becomes really conspicuous in Rimsky-Korsakoff's next opera, "Kostchei the Immortal"—finished in 1902—in which, to quote Cheshikin, the composer "turns suddenly from Dargomijsky to Wagner." While remaining faithful to the declamatory method and employing it with a marked increase of power, Rimsky-Korsakoff now began somewhat to overload his score with harmonic complexities. But notwithstanding its stylistic modifications "Kostchei" is in the same class as far as concerns subject—which is again derived from folk-lore—with "Sadko" and "Tsar Saltan." Its plan, the work of E. M. Petrovsky, does not confine itself to one particular story, but embraces material from a variety of tales in which the monstrous figure of Kostchei appears. We have already made the acquaintance of this fearsome object in the Triglav scene of "Mlada," and he is one of the chief

characters in Stravinsky's ballet, "The Firebird." "Kostchei," says Ralston in his "Russian Folk-Tales," "is merely one of the many incarnations of the dark spirit . . . sometimes he is described as altogether serpent-like in form; sometimes he seems to be of a mixed nature, partly human and partly ophidian, but in some stories he is apparently framed after the fashion of a man . . . he is called 'immortal' or 'deathless' because of his superiority to the ordinary laws of existence . . . sometimes his 'death'—that is, the object with which his life is indissolubly connected—does not exist within his body." In "Mlada" he is described as the "Man-Skeleton" which appears to support the contention that the name is derived from the Russian word "Kost," a bone. The opera is in three *tableaux*. The first depicts "Autumn in the Kingdom of Kostchei." The "inexhaustibly beautiful Tsarevna (another frequent figure in Russian folklore) is held captive by Kostchei and bewails her separation from Ivan Korolevich, her lover. Kostchei is in doubt as to the whereabouts of his "death" and inquires of Bouria Bogatyr, a benevolent hero, as to its exact situation. He is informed that it lies in the tears of Kostcheievna, his daughter. In the second *tableau*, Kostcheievna, emerging from her palace with a flower vase in her hand, announces that the one seeking Kostchei's death must drink of the water in the vase. Tsarevna's lover, Ivan Korolevich, of whom Kostcheievna is also enamoured, now enters and drinks at her bidding; in consequence he loses all memory of his betrothed. On being kissed by Kostcheievna he swoons, but just as she is about to kill him with her sword, Bouria Bogatyr returns and awakes Ivan with

his song The latter then learns that his sweetheart is thinking of him and he flies away on a magic carpet. In the third *tableau*, in which there is a return to the first scene, Ivan Korolevich rejoins Tsarevna and they prepare to leave the kingdom of Kostchei, but Kostcheievna intervenes and tries to secure the affections of Ivan, promising Tsarevna's freedom as a condition of his capitulation. The terrible Kostchei, aroused by the discussion, questions his daughter as to whether she has his "death" in safe keeping. He gets an unlooked-for reply. Tsarevna, overcome by pity, kisses the forehead of the disappointed woman Kostcheievna bursts into tears and is transformed into a weeping willow. Kostchei is killed by this exposure of his "death," his kingdom collapses and Pouria Bogatyr opens the gate and releases the lovers.

An examination of the work as a whole drives one to the opinion that it is the subject rather than the music which is typical of Rimsky-Korsakoff as poet; and as poet the composer does not belong to the glorifiers of beauty unadorned by purpose. Objective as his attitude invariably was, he did not entirely exclude philosophy from the narration of such a tale as "Kostchei," and the libretto is permeated by a symbolism which is very beautiful and not altogether devoid of subtlety. ~~As for the music, it is hardly on the same plane and does not seem to be couched in suitable terms.~~ The characterisation of Kostchei is successful because in this case the Wagnerian manner is not an incongruity; the passage which accompanies the location of Kostchei's "death," in the first *tableau*, may be quoted as an instance. But generally speaking, the harmonisation is too harsh to form a fitting

The first scene shows us a mill in the forest—the trysting place of Boleslav Chaplinsky and Maria Oskolskaya, both of noble birth. The lovers are interrupted by the arrival of the marshal who is to make suitable preparations at the clearing by the mill, the halting place of Pan Voyevoda's hunting-party. Maria confides to her lover, as they leave the spot, that she once met Pan Voyevoda but that he appeared too much embarrassed to return her salutation. In reality, it transpires, Pan Voyevoda has been smitten by Maria's charm and when his sweetheart, Yadviga Zapolskaya, learns of this she angrily orders a resumption of the hunt. Presently Maria and Chaplinsky return and find Pan Voyevoda alone. Thinking that Maria has come to surrender herself to him, he attempts to embrace her, but is prevented by Chaplinsky, who explains that he is Maria's accepted lover. Pan Voyevoda at first ignores him, but fearing his menacing attitude, calls the hunt to his assistance. Chaplinsky offers resistance but is wounded and captured. Maria swoons. Pan Voyevoda introduces her as his future bride and invites the hunt to his wedding, much to the dismay and astonishment of Yadviga.

The second act brings us to the door of a little hut where dwells Doroscha, a sorcerer, whom Yadviga has come to consult. Doroscha brings a bowl of water and Yadviga, gazing into it, sees a vision of Pan Voyevoda's wedding with Maria. Frenzied with jealousy and bent on revenge she prevails upon Doroscha to give her some poison. An offer of help from Olesnetski, a young neighbour, who is in love with her and has overheard part of the conversation, somewhat unnerves

Yadviga, but she quickly regains her self-possession and feigning an affection for him, binds him to secrecy. They hear footsteps and hide. Chaplinsky enters with his friend, Pavlavski. The former is trying to regain the freedom of Maria, who, he hears, has been terrified into submission. With the aid of his friends he decides to fall upon Pan Voyevoda on the wedding day.

Act III opens with the wedding feast at Voyevoda's house. Having toasted the bride and bridegroom the guests go out into the garden. Yadviga enters but is interrupted at the moment when she is about to put the poison in Maria's glass. On the return of the party, Yadviga betrays Chaplinsky's plan, and on the latter's entrance, he finds Pan Voyevoda prepared.

In the last act the scene remains unchanged. Voyevoda effects Chaplinsky's capture, and infuriated by Maria's pleadings, proposes to kill him. Yadviga now persuades Olesnetski to introduce the poison into Maria's glass but seeing Voyevoda embrace Yadviga, to whom he is trying to make amends for his fickleness to her, Olesnetski changes his plans, and when Maria and Voyevoda drink, it is the latter who dies.

"Pan Voyevoda" contains many charming numbers. The chorus of women, the comic slumber song (Maria and chorus), a pretty vocal mazurka and an orchestral Krakoviak in the first act, an instrumental intermezzo ("Nocturne") which has a certain Chopinesque character; in the second, the opening mazurka, already referred to; in the third, the polacca, the swan song, to the accompaniment of Maria's lute, and the Kozachok, with which the act concludes, are all well worthy of mention.



This work, which was composed during 1902-3, was produced at Prince Tsereteli's Private Theatre, St. Petersburg, in October, 1904, and in Moscow at the Great Theatre twelve months later.

"The Tale of the Invisible City of Kitej and the Maiden Fevronia," Rimsky-Korsakoff's last opera but one, has for its subject a religio-mystic legend which contains features recalling some of the stories from which certain of his earlier works are derived. The element of the allegorical to be found in "Snegourochka" and "Kostchei," the super-naturalistic phenomena of "Czar Saltan" and the religious teachings of "Servillia," each has its counterpart in the literary material of "Kitej." As to the significance of the work in relation to the æsthetic development of its composer, this may be determined more or less by reference to its resemblance, in virtue of its spiritual message, to "Parsifal." The operatic style of "Kitej" is on the whole lyrical or melodic, with occasional lapses into melo-declamation. It is in four acts and six *tableaux* and the libretto is by Bielsky.

In the first act, which takes place in a forest near Little Kitej, the Maiden Fevronia offers a thanksgiving to nature and calls around her many representatives of the animal world. While surrounded by them she is surprised by Prince Vsevolod, the son of the ruler of Kitej, who, overcome by her beauty, proposes an exchange of rings. During the love scene which follows, a number of soldiers enter the wood and they inquire from Fevronia as to the whereabouts of the prince who has just left her side. In return she asks the prince's name and learns his origin with the greatest astonishment.

A public place in Little Kitej is the scene of the second act, in the early part of which a minstrel sings, to the accompaniment of his *guslee*, relating that he has seen the Virgin walking on the walls of Kitej and proclaiming a prophecy to the effect that ruin threatens the city. The citizens, after the first shock, are disinclined to attach importance to the story, but at the moment when the nuptial procession of Fevronia and the young prince, now affianced, is about to begin, the Tartars arrive on the scene and, having obtained the aid of Grischka Kuternia—a drunken rascal who consents to act as their guide—they seize Fevronia and proceed on their way to attack Kitej. Fevronia prays that the city may be rendered invisible.

The third act is in two *tableaux*. The first shows an open place in front of the cathedral of Great Kitej. News is brought that the Tartars are advancing, and a boy is sent to the loftiest point of the cathedral to ascertain whether there are any signs of divine interference. He reports at first that the Tartars are in sight and that the city is in flames, but when the people invoke the Virgin they hear from the boy that a white veil is descending over the site of Kitej. They go out to meet the enemy. The second *tableau* pictures the lake on which the city stands. The Tartars are informed by their traitor-guide that Kitej is enveloped in a thick mist. Supposing Grischka to have betrayed them, the invaders bind him to a tree and encamp themselves for the night. Two of the chieftains brawl over the question of possessing Fevronia and one of them is killed. Whilst the Tartars are asleep Fevronia severs Grischka's bonds and they set off together. The Tartars, on awaking, see the re-

flection of Kitej on the lake's surface, but the city itself is invisible.

Act IV is again in two *tableaux*. The fugitives are seen in the forest. Grischka sneers at Fevronia's fatigue and she prays that he may be endowed with the attribute of sympathy. Grischka, regretting his ignorance of the form of worship demanded by Fevronia's deity, addresses himself to Earth, but on perceiving a Satanic figure, takes to flight. Fevronia then stretches herself on the ground. The trees are illuminated and gold and silver flowers spring up around her. The voice of Alkonost, a bird of Paradise, is heard proclaiming that those to whom he sings die. Fevronia answers that she fears not death, and sees a vision of her betrothed come from Paradise to meet her. Sirin, a second bird, now sings that he represents Joy and that to whom he sings will live everlastingly. The Prince offers Fevronia the bread brought with him from Paradise and tells her that in eating it she will gain unabating happiness. They depart together. The second and last scene is that of Kitej transformed into Paradise itself, in answer to the prayers of its people. The lovers are admitted and prepare for a heavenly union.

"Kitej" was composed between 1903 and 1905 and produced at the Maryinsky Theatre on February 7, 1907. A year later it was put into the bill at the Moscow Great Theatre.

From the occasional side-lights cast upon the character of our subject, the reader may perhaps have already gathered that Rimsky-Korsakoff was not the sort of man to brook any kind of injustice without protest. Reference has been made to the rebuke admin-

istered to the Imperial Operatic authority. This does not appear to have been attended with any disastrous consequences. But when, in 1905, Rimsky-Korsakoff felt called upon openly to resent the interferences of the Imperial Russian Musical Society in the affairs of the St Petersburg Conservatoire on the one hand, and on the other the over-strict supervision to which music-students were subjected by the police, the worthy professor found himself summarily deprived of his official position. That he had used his influence to prevent the students themselves from demonstrating in favour of reform was the subject of misinterpretation, and this, instead of being considered as lessening the original offence, was brought as additional evidence against him.

The matter which for a time assumed a rather grave complexion, ended happily, and after he had been supported by several colleagues who resigned their professorships in a body, by way of protest, the Conservatoire succeeded in obtaining a measure of self-government, Glazounoff was appointed at its head, and Rimsky-Korsakoff was reinstated.

He was now at work upon his last opera. "The Golden Cock" cannot perhaps be considered as an impressive conclusion to the dramatic labours of its composer; one would rather have seen in that position such earlier and more thoroughly representative works as "Czar Saltan," "Sadko" or "Snegourochka." But viewed as a satire upon human foibles, as a specimen of nationalistic art or as a final chapter in the story of his musico-dramatic development, it is a work which deserves not merely such attention as may be given it in a perusal of its score, but that fuller exposition only

properly to be secured from stage performance. If in "The Golden Cock" we fail to discover the wealth of harmonic inspiration which we are accustomed to expect from this composer, we shall at least observe both that it contains the very essentials of Russian musical nationalism and that the firm hand of experience has been at work in tracing a steady course and thus overcoming the difficult and ever-present problems of construction. The melo-declamatory method has again been resorted to in the solo portions, the formal overture is dispensed with, the leading-motive has been used with a lightness of touch that has contributed greatly to its effectiveness, and the comic aspect of the story has been translated into the music in a fashion avoiding all appearance of undue emphasis. The story of "The Golden Cock" is derived from Pushkin, and while, as its librettist points out, its subject is such as could win favour in any clime and at any period, Rimsky-Korsakoff can be said to have given it a dress which is unmistakably Russian.

The opera is in three acts. The fairy tale is "introduced" by an astrologer who appears before the curtain and in a brief preamble assures the audience that though fantastic in its style, the fable to be recounted has a moral which is sound. A few bars of sombre chords prepare the spectators for the grave happenings they are about to witness. King Dodon laments from his throne the weightiness of his crown; he is harassed by his enemies, who have so little sympathy that at the very moment when he is carefully guarding the northern boundary of his kingdom they show a peculiarly irritating perverseness by attacking him from the south. He invites suggestions for the strengthening of his

kingdom's defences. His two sons, Guidon and Aphron, respond with two plans totally different but equally absurd. The old general, Polkan, infuriated at the delight with which Dodon receives these manifestations of genius, enunciates some home-truths in regard to the principles of attack and defence, but is denounced as a traitor. During the tumult which follows there enters the old astrologer who reminds the King of the many sage counsels given to his royal parent, and offers, as a safeguard against invasion, a golden cock who at every appearance of danger will crow a warning. The King and his people have but to sleep and to put their trust in chanticleer. Dodon is overjoyed at this facile solution of all his problems and promises a liberal reward. After a plentiful repast he retires to his couch and dreams of a beautiful unknown. Rudely awakened by the watch-bird, he dispatches his army, in charge of his two sons, to meet the enemy, rearranges his pillows and sinks once more into slumber. Hardly is he again in the company of the lady of his dream when the cock renews his warning and Polkan announces that things are going very badly. Dodon resolves therefore to accompany his general to the front.

In the second act they discover their army to have been defeated and find that the two princes are among the fallen. At dawn they perceive a tent, evidently belonging to the enemy. They decide to attack the tent in force and train a cannon upon it. Polkan gives the word to fire but at that moment the curtain of the tent is drawn aside and a beautiful and queenly figure emerges (to the music of Dodon's dream). The scene in the tent where Dodon gradually succumbs to the

charms of the Queen Chemakhansky, who, after exercising all her powers of seduction, prevails upon the old man to sing and even to dance, and finally obtains the honour of a royal proposal of marriage, is accompanied by music which is doubly characteristic of Rimsky-Korsakoff because it reflects so well the satirical humour of the dramatic situation and because the opportunity offered by the Oriental colouring of the scene is, as one would suppose, firmly seized by the composer with both hands. The King's song, described by the enchantress as burning with the flame of love, is cruder and more grotesque than that of Beckmesser, while the languorous strain of the erstwhile dream-music is now metamorphosed to suggest the charmer's mocking.

In the third act Dodon having returned home with his bride, is reminded of his promised reward by the astrologer, who claims nothing less than the person of the Queen herself. Dodon, infuriated at this impertinence, slays the old man, but is not permitted long to survive him, being laid low by the cock with one swift stroke of its beak. There is a chorus of terror from the citizens and darkness falls upon the scene. When light returns neither the Queen nor the cock are to be seen. After the curtain's fall the astrologer comes forward and assures the audience that in this sanguinary conclusion there is really no cause for consternation, explaining that the only mortal figures in the drama are himself and the Queen.

"The Golden Cock" was censored during the interval between its composition and its composer's death, and it was not until May, 1910, that it was produced at Zimin's Private Theatre in Moscow.

Rimsky-Korsakoff died somewhat unexpectedly of

angina pectoris on June 8, 1908, and it is supposed that his chagrin at the fate of his last opera was contributory to the suddenness of his demise. Several posthumous works were found, among which were his edition of Moussorgsky's abortive opera, "Marriage"—since published—and his treatise on orchestration.

This somewhat lengthy chapter must not be concluded without a final summary of Rimsky-Korsakoff's varied musical activities. First and foremost comes his work as a nationalistic propagandist, in which sphere he firmly upheld the Glinkist principle that the nation must be considered as creators and the composer rather as "arranger" of the popular contribution. In this capacity Korsakoff must be acclaimed as the most ardently patriotic composer yet seen in Russia. The student of his operas will see that he took a liberal view as to what could be considered to constitute true nationalism in music and in music-drama. In each of them there was an element of the nationalistic; either the subject was drawn from history, from folk-lore—and in the latter case his affinity for the Oriental helped him the better to illustrate material which itself was tinged, by reason of its origin, with Eastern colour—or, as in the case of "Mozart and Salieri," he adopted a work which was fully recognised as a masterpiece from the pen of Russia's greatest poet, and thus aroused the interest of the public by means of a new light cast by him on an art product already regarded as an ornament of the literature of its creator's country.

Rimsky-Korsakoff was a prolific song-writer and published some eighty "melodies" and "romances." Examination of these will give a fairly clear insight into his talents and limitations as pure music-maker.



In "The Nymph," Op. 56, for instance, we find a melody sufficiently lacking in lyrical grace to suggest that it might have been an essay in Dargomijskian declamation, whereas when, as in his setting of Maikoff's "Melody from the Ganges" or in that of the same poet's "Song of the Orient," he hears the call of the East, the composer appears always at his very best. When, as in such specimens as "Night," he attempts the actual creation of a lyric, he is far from reaching the heights attained in "The Rose Enslaves the Nightingale," one of his earliest and choicest vocal compositions.

To the choral repertory he made several notable contributions. One of these, "The Doom of Oleg," for tenor and bass, male choir and orchestra, was given at the Newcastle-on-Tyne Festival in 1909. Special mention may be made of the fifteen folk-songs for mixed chorus, Op. 19, and the "Gloria," Op. 21, for chorus and orchestra, and it is of interest to note that his last numbered work was the "Dobynouchka," for chorus and orchestra, Op. 62.

~~Both as composer and teacher he has played a large part in the advancement of the art of orchestration, and his pedagogic labours are best eulogised by an~~ enumeration of his many eminent pupils, among whom may be counted Glazounoff, Liadoff, Arensky, Ippolitoff-Ivanoff, Grechaninoff, Wihtol, Tcherepnin, Taneieff and Stravinsky. By no means his least achievement was that course of study which enabled him to prove to those who levelled the reproach of amateurism at the "Koutchkisti" that the nationalistic feeling in music was not necessarily dissipated by a knowledge of the approved principles of musical theory. It has

been said that Rimsky-Korsakoff must verily have 'been created for the National Epos in Russian music. In him we see the Russian who, though not by any means satisfied with Russia as he finds it, does not set himself to hurl a series of passionate but ineffective indictments against things as they are, but who raises an ideal and does his utmost to show how best that ideal may be attained. He has been compared with his own Fevronia from "Kitej," seeking inspiration from Nature. His personality appears to have been reflected by his choice of subject in his operatic works, in which we find him so frequently glorifying the virtue of imagination, so plainly voicing that belief in the "fairies" which has been the theme of more than one of our modern British dramatists.

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PART III.  
THE DECLINE OF NATIONALISM.

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I

GLAZOUNOFF.

BY those at all acquainted with the sociological history of Russia it will readily be believed that once the immediate influence of Rimsky-Korsakoff was removed, the star of Nationalism began to wane. One of the remarkable phenomena to be noticed as belonging to a nation whose character consists of some quite baffling contradictory traits, is that while the government pursues a course of consistently equivocal behaviour towards the social modifications approved by Western nations, Russian society is ever ready to adopt the most modern occidental views in the domain of the arts. The Slav element in the Russian, stultifying his loudest and most chauvinistic professions, renders him an eclectic in spite of himself.

It would be natural to suppose, when remembering the names of Rimsky-Korsakoff's most successful pupils—mentioned in the last chapter—that the transfigured master would gaze down from Kitej in confident and beatific expectation of seeing his nationalistic message spread through musical Russia by an

enthusiastic band of apostles. The fact is, however, that the strongest trace of his influence is to be found in the sphere of orchestral technique; the nationalistic ideal is no longer revered as once it was, and the search for a perfect operatic style has been abandoned for the reason that the second generation has had very little regard for opera as an art-form and the third even less.

The names of those pupils and friends whom Rimsky-Korsakoff probably regarded as a potential apostolic progeny are Glazounoff, Liadoff, Liapounoff and Arensky. Of these it must be said that though each has contributed in a varying degree to the furtherance of the nationalistic programme, each has in his own way succumbed to cosmopolitan influences. Glazounoff, in early life a disciple of Balakireff, has gradually modified his style until at the present moment he can hardly be said to fulfil the function, not long since credited to him, of successfully uniting the principles of Nationalism with those of Western tradition. Liadoff and Liapounoff come within one category, in that both were employed by the Commission appointed in 1893 by the Imperial Geographical Society to make researches in folk-song, and the fruit of their labours was subsequently published. They may also be grouped together by virtue of their predilection for the piano. Liapounoff's pianistic compositions are perhaps to be regarded as carrying on the tradition of Balakireff, and as having, here and there, something peculiarly Russian in their flavour; but Liadoff, although removed (unlike Liapounoff, who studied in Moscow) from the influence of the Westernising group, shows a strong inclination to roam abroad, now to

Poland, now to Germany, in search of the traditional pianistic style. The remaining one of the four composers mentioned was outlived by his master. Arensky is to be looked upon as a close follower of Tchaikovsky, whom he resembles in certain qualities and defects. He has employed folk-tunes but in a fashion remote from the teachings of the *Koutchkisti*. As with most music in the composition of which prettiness would appear to have been the principal aim, Arensky's output is rapidly losing the favour which it has undoubtedly enjoyed.

Alexander Constantinovich Glazounoff was born at St. Petersburg on August 10, 1865. His father was a member of a well-known and old-established firm of booksellers and publishers, and was given, as its representative, in 1882, the rank of nobility. His mother was a talented pupil of Balakireff. He therefore enjoyed, from the first, the advantage of a sound literary and musical environment. His first musical training was received at the hands of a lady pupil of Kontsky, Kholodkoff by name, but when twelve years of age he was placed with Elenkovsky, who supplemented the piano lessons with some theoretical instruction and frequent perusals of the symphonic and chamber classics. Musically precocious, he assimilated the rudiments with extreme rapidity. It seems curious that the opportunity of listening to a symphony orchestra should have been denied the youth until fourteen years of age, but not at all strange that on repeating the experience he should have begun at once to feel the desire to compose a symphonic work. In 1880 he was fortunate enough to secure the advice of Balakireff, who persuaded him that his principal need for the

moment was a wide general knowledge and a close study of the musical classics. He went accordingly to Rimsky-Korsakoff, and, making phenomenal progress, was soon able to give convincing proof of his talent for composition. Two years after his meeting with the Nestor of the Koutchka, and while still a school-boy, he was honoured by the performance of his first symphony at a Free School concert, under Balakireff's conductorship. This work was later to secure for him the strong sympathy of Liszt.

In 1883 he left school, passed into the University, and joined its orchestra with the object of familiarising himself with the symphonic manner. Having now established his claim to a musical individuality, he determined to strengthen his position and his self-confidence by setting to work on a variety of compositions. In rapid succession came a string quartet in D which incurred some rather faint praise from Tchaikovsky, who though "pleasantly surprised," was annoyed by the "imitations of Rimsky-Korsakoff," a pianoforte suite on a theme based on S.A.S.C.H.A., the diminutive of his own name, Alexander, and an overture on Greek themes which earned for him the regard of Anton Rubinstein, who conducted a performance. This work, Op. 3, and a subsequent overture, both written between 1881 and 1885, were based upon themes appearing in the well-known collection of Greek and Oriental popular melodies published in 1876 by L. A. Bourgault-Ducoudray. About this time Glazounoff was fortunate enough to attract the notice of Belaieff, who took a very considerable interest in the young composer and undertook the publication of his works. This circumstance, together with the favour-



able opinion of Liszt, who conducted the first symphony at Weimar in 1884, resulted in an early popularisation of Glazounoff's output in Western Europe. With such an auspicious beginning it is not strange that his career should have been free from the set-backs and disappointments usually associated with the lives of composers of true merit. Continuing to devote himself to instrumental music he found himself quickly recognised at the great European musical centres.

In 1886 he finished his second symphony, which he dedicated to Liszt, and it was performed in the same year. In this work the influence of the Hungarian master may easily be traced; there is, for instance, the cyclic employment of a principal theme which appears in each of the four movements; that the composer was at this time in sympathy with nationalistic ideals is shown both by its modal treatment and its Oriental harmonisation. A commemorative march prepared in anticipation of his parents' silver wedding in the following year belongs also to 1888.

In 1889 he conducted some of his own works at a concert devoted to Russian composers at the Paris Exhibition and received, together with an expression of goodwill from Tchaikovsky, a notification that the Moscow master had recommended a new symphonic work for performance in Berlin. This was the "poem," "Stenka Razin," Op. 13, based on a story of the Cossack raider of that name, whose revolt against the Czar Alexis (son of the first Romanoff) ended in his capture and execution in 1672, the date of Peter the Great's birth. Stenka Razin is the hero of many national ballads. The substance of Glazounoff's "plot" relates to his last exploit, and after recounting the ill-omened

dream of the captive Persian princess (his mistress) who foretells his capture by the Czars troops—a prophecy immediately fulfilled—proceeds to tell us how Stenka suddenly remembers his indebtedness to the Volga—the scene of many a victory—and offers the person of his beautiful princess, his most precious possession, as a sacrifice to the river. This work which is built upon three themes associated respectively with the pirate, the princess and the sailors (the latter figures as a hauliers' song in Balakireff's collection) may be regarded as typical of Glazounoff's first period in which he was attracted by picturesque and imaginative subjects, and hardly at all foreshadowing his later style, his sympathy with classical methods of composition, and his admiration of Brahms.

Several other works of a programmatic nature came, however, from his pen before this emancipation was complete, among them the orchestral fantasias, "The Forest" and "The Sea," the symphonic sketch, "A Slavonic Festival," an "Oriental Rhapsody" in three parts and a symphonic *tableau*, "The Kremlin." But it was in a much later work that Glazounoff reached the zenith of his power of expressing emotions derived from the contemplation of the deeds of epic heroes. In his "Raymonda" ballet the composer shows an inclination to realise the picturesque aspect of mediæval times which later was given full play in his suite, "The Middle Ages." Its "programme" is as follows. During the absence of the Crusader Jean de Brienne, Raymond's betrothed, she is importuned by the Saracen Abdourahman. Undismayed by her indifference to his proposal, his wealth and the magnificence of his retinue, he plans her abduction. In this he is thwarted

by the return of de Brienne who challenges him to a duel, slays him and marries Raymonda.

In such works as this Glazounoff may be considered to figure as a notable successor to his precursors Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakoff. It will be observed that, while satisfying the demands of those who exact a procedure pertaining to the nationalistic school in a Russian composer's work, he has succeeded in appealing to occidental tastes with a class of composition that neither violates the formalistic traditions of classic music nor necessitates, for its proper appreciation, an acquaintance with the Slavonic and oriental idea and idiom.

Thus, since his first foreign appearance in Paris, he has found a ready acceptance in European countries. His fourth symphony (again in cyclic form) was produced by the London Philharmonic Society in 1897 and his fifth by Sir Henry (then Mr.) Wood in the same year. For the Chicago Exhibition of 1895 he composed a triumphal march with chorus. In 1903 his seventh symphony was performed at the Royal College of Music and three years later he received an honorary degree from Cambridge University. He has conducted concerts of Russian music in Hamburg, Ostend and Paris.

Glazounoff's development into a devotee of "pure" music has been gradual. Since the time when in "The Forest" he seemed inclined towards a style which led to his being hailed as a lineal descendant of the composer of "Russlan and Ludmilla" he has little by little drawn himself away from the practice of dedicating his music to the expression of graphic and suggestive ideas. From Rimsky-Korsakoff he derived a

magnificent technique which he now employs for a purpose almost wholly foreign to his teacher's conception of the proper sphere of music. While Rimsky-Korsakoff sought to enlarge his technique in order the better to express his adoration of nature, and further to heighten his power of using the colours on his descriptive palette, Glazounoff has exploited his musical technique to an entirely different end. The beauty of his music is to be sought in his themes, which are not necessarily related to a poetic idea (and which, it must be said, have lately shown too strong a resemblance one to the other) and the artistic worthiness of their metamorphosis.

Since the period of the fifth symphony (1895), the sixth (1896) and "Raymonda" (finished 1897) he seems, while retaining a taste for "programme" and romanticism to have renounced the deliberately depictive manner and even the "Middle Ages" suite (1902) does no more than give a general and not at all a particular interpretation of the subject. The violin concerto (1904), though it eschews formalistic severity is classical as to thematic material, development and harmonisation. In more recent works such as the symphonic prologue, "In Memory of Gogol" (1909) which opens with a capricious theme exceedingly suggestive of Straussian influence, the Finnish fantasia produced at Helsingfors in November, 1910, the "Kalevala Legend," Op. 89, and the *pièce d'occasion* composed for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Russian symphony concerts (November 23, 1909), we find a patriotic purpose carried out in a manner which, beyond the occasional employment of an indigenous theme—

when almost imperative—is quite remote from the primary traditions of the St. Petersburg school.

The history of Glazounoff's defection from the nationalists might without much difficulty be traced by recalling his dedications. Inscribed on his first symphony, Op. 5, the second overture on Greek themes, Op. 6, "Stenka Razin," Op. 13, and the orchestral "Idylle and Reverie orientale" are found the names of Rimsky-Korsakoff, Balakireff, Borodin and Cui respectively. Before rendering a like homage to the ultra-progressive Moussorgsky, in "The Kremlin," Op. 30, he dedicated the second symphony, Op. 16, to Liszt and "The Sea," Op. 28, to Wagner, paying a tribute at about the same time, in his Oriental Rhapsodie, Op. 29, to Répin, to whom we are indebted for some fine portraits of Glinka, the Koutchkisti, and an early one of Glazounoff himself. The third symphony, Op. 33, is not only dedicated to but is certainly influenced by Tchaikovsky, the "Carnival" overture, Op. 45, bears the name of Laroche, a critic who, though living in St. Petersburg, had very little sympathy with the nationalist group and was an ardent advocate of Tchaikovsky and conservative principles, the fourth symphony, Op. 48, celebrates Anton Rubinstein, and the fifth, Op. 55, S. I. Taneieff, Tchaikovsky's close friend. The belated tribute to Stasoff—the "Cortège Solennel," Op. 50—was composed in honour of the publication of a "jubilee" edition of the critic's collected works (in 1894).

A more direct method of noting the change is that of reference to Glazounoff's songs. A perusal of the two sets of six, Op. 59 and 60, for instance, will not bring to light anything even approaching the style of

the "Oriental Romance" (to Pushkin's text), one of the two "Melodies," Op. 27. Such favourite vocal compositions as "Desire," "The Nereid" and "Delia," while constituting a shining example of the art of song-writing, do not "burn with the ardent flame" of the first-quoted work.

Glazounoff's preoccupation with the orchestra as a medium has not prevented him from making a valuable contribution to chamber-music. Besides his five numbered quartets he has published a suite of five "Novelettes"—a delightful example of an eclecticism which has begun, musically speaking, more or less near home—a suite of four movements, the last consisting of a theme with variations, the Slav quartet, from the final movement of which the orchestral "Slavonic Festival" (likewise Op. 26) is derived, and two pieces, Prelude and Fugue and Courante. There are also his essays in collaborative composition: the Christmas Carol in the Belaieff birthday quartet (with Liadoff and Rimsky-Korsakoff), a Prelude and Fugue and a section of the polka in "Les Vendredis" and the bracing "Finale" of the quartet on Belaieff's name, in which he joins Rimsky-Korsakoff, Liadoff and Borodin in celebrating the Russian musical Maecenas. He has also published a String Quintet, Op. 39.

Some of his choral works have been mentioned. The joint cantata (with Liadoff) for tenor solo, chorus and orchestra, in memory of Antokolsky, the celebrated sculptor, one of Glazounoff's latest works, must not pass unnoticed, nor must our subject's labours in the scoring of much of Borodin's "Prince Igor" and in the editing of Glinka's works.

Glazounoff, as related in the foregoing chapter, was



## II.

### LIADOFF AND LIAPOUNOFF.

OF some of Anatol Constantinovich Liadoff's activities we have already learned. As an ally of the Koutchka he was responsible for various numbers to be found in their joint works: in the "Paraphrases"—originating with the "chopsticks" duet (suggested by Borodin's protégée)—there are a goodly number of variations to which the initials "A. L." are appended, and his name figures four times as composer in the succeeding series of little pieces; to the "Beliaeff" quartet he contributed a scherzo, to the "Birthday" pieces the "Glorification"; he wrote a canon for the "Variations on a Popular Russian Air" in collaboration with nine others, and in the "Vendredi" his trio (in the polka to which it belongs the first and second sections are by Sokoloff and Glazounoff) his mazurka and his fugue are by no means the least charming numbers in this fascinating collection. It should also be mentioned that he assisted in the orchestration of the music for the ballet based on Schumann's "Carnival" and of that of Chopin used for "Les Sylphides."



Liadoff was born at St. Petersburg on April 29, 1855. His grandfather had been a musician by calling and his father, conductor at the St. Petersburg Imperial Opera, was that Constantine Liadoff who in the early sixties came to Moussorgsky's assistance, and gave a public performance of the ill-fated composer's "Œdipus." The uncle was also employed at the Opera in the capacity of ballet-conductor. Anatol was thus from the first destined for a musical career. After receiving some instruction from his father, he entered the violin class at the Conservatoire, and showing aptitude for composition, was soon chosen to receive Rimsky-Korsakoff's instruction in orchestration and form, studying, the while, harmony, counterpoint and fugue with Johansen. In 1877, having finished these courses, he wrote, as an exercise, a cantata which was so highly esteemed that in the ensuing year, at the age of twenty-three, he was appointed to an assistantship in the Conservatoire, where he is now professor of harmony and composition. Since 1894 he has been associated first with Rimsky-Korsakoff and more recently with Glazounoff as assistant-conductor of the Musical Society. For a time he held also the professorship of theory and of subjects constituting the general preparation for the career of choirmaster in the Imperial Chapel.

His most important subscription to, or espousal of the cause of Russian music—apart from his pedagogic labours—is undoubtedly those collections of national songs which form his Op. 14, 18 and 22 (for children), Op. 45 for female voice, and the three volumes, Op. 48, comprising one hundred and twenty popular airs which were collected when in the employ of the Geo-

graphical Society. As a writer for the orchestra he seems to have developed his taste somewhat late in life. His polonaise in memory of Pushkin, although numbered Op. 49, comes quite early in the list of his symphonic works. He has since published (in 1903) an exceedingly clever Scherzo, Op. 56, entitled "Baba Yaga," in which he gives a vivid musical presentation of one of the many stories of this traditionally fearsome old witch, a series of eight orchestral versions of Russian popular songs (dedicated to that highly imaginative and talented illustrator of folk-stories, I. A. Bilibin), a very charming and poetic "legend" entitled "The Enchanted Lake," Op. 62, a polonaise for the unveiling of a statue to A. Rubinstein, and an Amazon's Dance, Op. 65. There is also a suite, "After Maeterlinck," which does not appear to have been published. Among his choral works is the "Last Scene from Schiller's 'Bride of Messina,'" Op. 28, for mixed voices and orchestra.

In his numerous piano pieces, while preserving a high level of taste, he has contrived to introduce a pleasing diversity of styles. The "Arabesques," Op. 4, and the fourteen "Biroulki," Op. 2 (the title denoting a Russian version of the parlour game known as "Spillikins") are valued items in the repertory of many pianists. Although very much addicted to the *Chopinesque* prelude, etude and mazurka he has written a certain number of genre pieces such as the sketch, "In the Steppe," Op. 23, and a more recent collection or suite of four pieces, "Grimace," "Gloom," "Temptation" and "Reminiscence."

Serge Mikhailovich Liapounoff is to be regarded as a musical grandson of Glinka and—to maintain the

metaphor—as the heir of Balakireff, with whom for many years he was on terms of the closest intimacy. From the founder of Russian opera he inherited his affinity for lyricism, whilst his association with the leader of the Koutchka—begun on his graduation from Moscow Conservatoire—strengthened a natural affection for national colour in music which probably sprang from the circumstance that, like Korsakoff and Moussorgsky, he had spent his youthful years in the country. Born on November 18, 1859, at Yaroslav, he was not a musically precocious child, and did not achieve any great distinctions either while at the then newly-opened Imperial School of Music at Nijni-Novgorod, which he entered in his fifteenth year, or at Moscow Conservatoire, where he studied the piano and composition. Leaving in 1883 and occupying himself for two years in teaching and composing, he migrated to St. Petersburg, met Balakireff, and in the same year was honoured by a performance, under the latter's direction, of his "Concert Overture," later published as a "ballad." One of his earliest compositions was a "Solemn Overture" on Russian theme, Op. 7, a work which voiced his enthusiasm for folk-song, a predilection shortly after gratified by his appointment as director of the commission under which Liadoff served. Liapounoff himself visited the governments of Vologda, Viatka and Kostroma and as an outcome of this journey he was able to produce no less than two hundred and sixty-five songs, duly published in 1899. During this undertaking he was appointed assistant in the Imperial Chapel. His orchestral compositions are few; they include a symphony, Op. 12, and a symphonic poem, Op. 37. But he has rendered signal ser-

vice to such pianists as are capable of undertaking performance of his brilliant but usually very difficult works for that instrument. The Concerto in E flat minor, written in 1890, dedicated to Balakireff and conducted by him at a Free School concert in the following year, makes a severe demand upon mechanical dexterity, while the "Etudes d'execution transcendente," Op. 11, of which there are twelve, are, in the same sense as the caprices of Paganini, "for artists alone." That they are dedicated to Liszt in whose memory No. 12, an elegie, was specially written, and that the "Lesghinka," No. 10, smacks strongly of Balakireff in his more heroic moments, is a fairly clear indication as to the origins of their composer. Liapounoff owes as much to the refining influences of the latter as he does to the former's lead in extending the boundaries of piano technique. He has written a number of much lighter pieces for the instrument, among which may be cited the "Divertissements," Op. 35. Since the "Solemn Overture" he has made a further addition to the list of art works inspired by folk-song in the rhapsody on Ukranian airs for piano and orchestra. The titles of some of his twelve songs as well as their treatment are again indicative of his artistic tendency; of them we may cite the "Oriental Romance," "On the Steppe" and "On the Banks of the Ganges." The composer has acknowledged his indebtedness to Balakireff by arranging and editing many of his works.

### III.

#### ARENSKY.

WE have lately reached a new epoch in musical criticism. Following the precedent set up by King Saul, critics, until a year or two ago, have never scrupled to pronounce a final condemnation of music which by reason of its incomprehensibility was not congenial to them. Nowadays, however, it is to be observed that the critic no longer refuses to profit by the appalling errors with which the history of music is punctuated and that critical opinion confronted with the music of the future proceeds to the extremity of caution and sits upon the fence that formerly served as a missile to be hurled at the offending innovator. But the medal has another side. One reads surprisingly little of the open-armed but mistaken enthusiasm with which certain composers of inferior music have been welcomed. An occasional reference to Buononcinists and Piccinists is the only reminder ever given that much of the music that in the past has glittered so brightly has since proved to be of much baser metal than the gold it seemed to be.

Among the composers who have been inflicted with a posthumous neglect, the more conspicuous owing to the unstinted praise lavished upon them during their lifetime is Arensky. Hailed in this country in 1897 as a composer of real strength and feeling and as a "representative of the modern Russian school" he has enjoyed a fleeting popularity which may be traced to certain superficially pleasing elements in such works as his piano trio, his quartets, the third orchestral suite (originally conceived as a piano duct, Op. 23) and the Variations, Op. 54, together with copious piano pieces possessing a more or less ephemeral charm, and such songs as the ball-room reminiscence, Op. 49, which has enjoyed a vogue due presumably to its being sufficiently banal to please popular taste and charming enough to seduce critical opinion. His three operas are unknown in this country.

Anton Stepanovich Arensky was born at Nijni-Novgorod on July 31, 1861. As his father, a medical man, was a proficient 'cellist and his mother an excellent pianist, his talent for music was anticipated in the family circle and at its earliest appearance was fostered by his parents. As quite a youngster he attended Rousseau's music school at St. Petersburg, where he studied under Zikke. At the age of eighteen he proceeded to the conservatoire and there found himself a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakoff and Johansen, gaining, in 1882, the institution's gold medal for composition. His First Symphony, Op. 4, and his Piano Concerto, Op. 2, won an immediate hearing and success at St. Petersburg and Moscow, respectively, and before the year was out he had been appointed professor of harmony and counterpoint at the Moscow Conservatoire. While

thus employed he came into frequent contact with Tchaikovsky, who showed a very warm regard for the young composer, often proffering his critical advice. In a letter dated 1885, the composer of the Pathetic Symphony protests against what he characterises as a mania for five-four rhythm which "threatens to become a habit with you" and states as his opinion that the "otherwise beautiful" *basso ostinato* from the six pieces, Op 5, should have been written either in three-four or six-four. In 1886 Tchaikovsky pleaded earnestly with Rimsky-Korsakoff on behalf of his former pupil and went the length of suggesting the substitution of one of Arensky's works in place of his own "Romeo" overture in the programme of a forthcoming concert. Another letter written in the year following contains a rebuke addressed to Arensky for his unfortunate choice of the subject of "Traviata" as literary basis for a symphonic fantasia. "How can an educated musician," he asks, "feel any interest in the production of Dumas *filis* when there are Homer, Shakespeare, Gogol, Pushkin, Dante, Tolstoy, Lermontoff and others . . . ." Further, when criticising the music in detail, he objects to the superficiality of its charm.

Tchaikovsky had no reason for complaint against Arensky's selection of "The Dream on the Volga" as the subject of his first opera, finished in 1890, seeing that it differed only in name from Ostrovsky's "Voyevoda" which he had himself cast in operatic form over twenty years previously, but which, possibly owing to Ostrovsky's own mutilations of his original five-act comedy, inspired the composer so little that he ultimately destroyed the score. "A Dream on the Volga" was successfully produced at Moscow in the year of its

completion. Very little evidence of a sympathy with nationalistic aims is forthcoming in Arensky's music as a whole, but it is worthy of note that in this opera he employed native folk-melody and not without success. His fantasia on Russian epic chants, Op. 48 (culled from Riabinin, the rhapsodist), for two pianos may here appropriately be mentioned.

From 1889 until 1893, Arensky held a position on the Synodal Council of Church Music at Moscow. During this period he refused the post of director of the Tiflis branch of the Russian Musical Society. From 1894 until 1901 he was conductor of the Moscow Choral Society, holding also for a time the directorship of the St. Petersburg Imperial Chapel, for which he was recommended by Balakireff.

His second opera, "Raphael" (in one act) was produced at the St Petersburg Congress of Russian Artists in 1894. "The Fountain of Baktchissarai" (on Pushkin's poem), Op. 46, for solo voices, chorus and orchestra is one of his best known works. Succeeding the production of his ballet, "A Night in Egypt," came, in 1899, the second one-act opera entitled "Nal and Damayanti" on a subject taken from one of the East Indian epics, introducing the matrimonial vicissitudes of King Nal, a gambler, who, but for his luck in playing Androcles to an unfortunate and subsequently grateful serpent, would have lost his wife in addition to the kingdom already diced away. This story has since been used by Bruch in a choral work. Arensky's operatic methods are described as a compromise between declamation and the melodic.

One of his last works of importance was the Piano Quintet, Op. 51, which suggests Brahmsian influence.



THIS, together with the second Quartet in A minor and the trio, has enjoyed no slight popularity in this country. Notable among his compositions are five works for two pianos; the first was afterwards scored for orchestra and introduced in this shape at Queen's Hall in 1896 and the third, the "Fantasia on Epic Chants," already mentioned, arranged for one solo instrument with orchestral accompaniment. Arensky's music as a whole shows the influence of Tchaikovsky and Schumann. Sometimes it seems to hint at an intellectuality which certainly cannot be said to obtrude itself; at others one is led to believe that with a greater capacity for refining and polishing he might have been successful in concealing his apparent want of discrimination in his selection of material.

Arensky died, when in the prime of life, at Terioki in Finland.

#### IV.

##### TCHAIKOVSKY, RUBINSTEIN AND THE ECLECTICS.

READERS of this volume who find themselves without data as to the life and work of the first-named composer will admit, on referring to the bibliography of the subject, compiled by the author of the article in Grove's "Dictionary," that they have little ground for complaint against the present writer's determination to abstain from needlessly adding to the existing number of biographical records. In this list is to be found sufficient material for all practical purposes.

But whereas recent writings and a deal of recent criticism have revealed a disinclination to accept Tchaïkovsky either as the typical Russian or as the immortal master-musician we in England at first supposed him to be, we may well devote some space to an inquiry as to the nature of his music and also as to its quality.

Since 1898, when Paris critics, having perused César Cui's study of Russian music, began to feel some misgivings in respect of the genuineness of that quality, hitherto characterised as Slavonic, by which Tchaïkov-

sky's music was permeated, there has been an ever-strengthening conviction that this composer's output is not properly to be regarded as truly Russian in spirit. To-day we observe that Germany and France have decided to consider Tchaikovsky's style as hardly at all representative of the modern Russian school and that, into the bargain, the musical public in those countries is so completely tired of his music that it is now very little heard.

In England the effects of an intoxication almost without a parallel in the annals of music are taking a longer time to evaporate, and by those who have never been aware that there was any question of his not being a truly typical Russian composer it is still believed that what is typically Tchaikovskian is fundamentally representative of his Slavonian nationality. As to those who are still able to pronounce him a genius of the very first water, one may point out that there is abundant evidence of a remarkable secession from their ranks.

Regarding Anton Rubinstein, also once called typically Russian and reckoned among the great composers, there seems little need to dwell upon the circumstance that both notions have long since been exploded. His fame now rests upon the more frail foundation of executive skill, which bears the same relation to the creative capacity—so far as concerns immortality—as do the soon forgotten triumphs of the histrion to the printed and indelible record of the playwright's merit.

The controversy that has raged around the work of Tchaikovsky is by no means of recent origin. So far, however, there seems to be so much difficulty in deter-

mining not only the precise nature of Nationalism in music but its value either to the country of its origin, or to the whole cosmopolitan art-world, that we may be excused for narrating here the circumstances which were responsible for the division of Russian musical society into two opposing factions.

The St. Petersburg Conservatoire was founded by Anton Rubinstein in 1861 and he remained its principal for five years. In the following year Balakireff organised his Free School of Music, now defunct. The Conservatoire, at first conservative (in the political sense of the term) became gradually but surely progressive, and when Rimsky-Korsakoff was appointed to a professorship—some ten years after its foundation—the thin edge of the nationalistic wedge may be said to have been introduced into the professorial attitude towards the musical art.

The Conservatoire in Moscow, founded by Nicholas Rubinstein in 1864, did not undergo the same emancipation. Its ideal was entirely opposed to that of Nationalism and consisted in a desire to build up a Russian school of composition by means of employing Western tradition as substance and relying upon a virtually non-existent native manner as architecture.

In 1865, Seroff, desirous of enjoying the triumphant success of his opera, "Rogneda," produced in St. Petersburg, declined the professorship offered him at Moscow—a city associated by him with the failure of his earlier work, "Judith"—and the post was offered to Tchaikovsky, who accepted it and for a time lived under the roof of its principal.

From this event the battle between Nationalism and Eclecticism or Universalism, between the Oriental and

Occidental parties in Russian musical circles may be said to date. Round about the opposing camps clustered a body of scribes who may almost be credited with having kindled the flame, but who at any rate fanned it with unabating vigour

In St Petersburg the pens of Cui and Stasoff were at the disposal of the Nationalists. Later on they had to reckon with Famintsin, who, after two years in Leipzig, returned to the capital bringing with him a veneration for tradition such as only a course of study in the German home of musical orthodoxy can engender

Laroche, one of the first to appreciate the merit of Tchaikovsky, also joined the anti-nationalist force on leaving Moscow for St Petersburg, and his criticisms of the Koutchkists are by no means the least virulent, although Seroff ran him pretty close

In the Muscovite capital the interests of the Nationalists were looked after by Krouglikoff, who so zealously emulated the most ardent advocate of the "Band" as to earn the style and title of "The Moscow Cui."

Moussorgsky's scena, "The Peepshow," gives an effective bird's-eye view of the conflict. As may be remembered, it gives a hint of the law-suit lost by Famintsin to Stasoff. Cui, we are aware, could give a blow rather better than take one. This is the treatment meted out to Anton Rubinstein. "It would be a serious error to consider Rubinstein as a Russian composer; he is merely a Russian who composes; his music is allied rather with that of Germany, and even when he utilises Russian themes the nature and spirit of Nationalism are always absent." Rubinstein, hailed the world over as a typical Russian, was naturally by

no means disposed to allow such pronouncements to pass unnoticed. But to judge by his opinion, voiced some time after the fight was at its fiercest, he did not lose his head when dealing with the merits and defects of his adversaries. "Our young Russian school," he wrote, "is, so far as concerns its orchestral music, the outcome of the influence of Berlioz and Liszt; when considering its works for the piano one must add to these the names of Schumann and Chopin. Super-imposed one observes a certain deliberate nationalistic manner. Its productions reveal a complete grasp of technique and a masterly handling of colour but, at the same time, as complete an absence of form and design. Glinka, who wrote a few pieces for orchestra based on national songs and dances, still serves as model to these young Russian composers, who continue to confine themselves largely to popular and national themes, exposing thereby their poverty of invention, a lack which they attempt to conceal under the cloak of 'nationalism' or by using the description of 'new school.'" Continuing, he admits the possibility of some future re-birth of music—a national style begotten by parent national themes—and pays a tribute to the undeniable talent of certain members of the new Russian school.

From even so slight an account as the above record of main and contributory events, it may easily be gathered that, but for the ferocious wielding of the "mightier" weapon, there would have been nothing approaching the bitterness that has prevailed in the conduct of this controversy. It seems safe, for instance, to assume that Tchaikovsky was led into the harsh criticisms he levelled at the heads of the nationalistic

circle—with whom, generally speaking, he was on exceedingly good terms—more by reason of a reflected antagonism to the views attributed to the new school than by any personal antipathy. One has only to peruse the letters written by him to Balakireff and Rimsky-Korsakoff, and his records of meetings with them, to perceive a marked difference between his behaviour towards them and his demeanour when an expression of opinion regarding them was invited. This difference the present writer prefers to attribute to the party prejudice, from which so few musicians in Russia were at that time free, than to deliberate and unblushing sincerity on Tchaikovsky's part. Whether to attribute the opinion given by Krouglikoff, that "everything good in Tchaikovsky's 'Mazeppa' is taken from Dargomijsky, Cui, Korsakoff and Moussorgsky" to party feeling or to actual fact is a point upon which silence is perhaps wisest.

It seems quite reasonable, then, to assume that but for the controversy aroused by camp-followers, the music of Tchaikovsky would have been judged upon its merits as pure music and not as an outrage against the nationalistic ideal. It is moreover conceivable that if the recent duel between two writers, respectively singing and contesting the virtues of British folk-tunes as thematic material in British compositions, had been conducted in a somewhat larger arena than the pages of a review not at all widely read among musicians in this country, there would have been a considerable rise in the price of ink and as considerable a fall in the standard of manners as must have occurred when Russian musical Nationalism and Eclecticism were the subjects of lively discussion.

There are apparently several points that have to be considered in respect of the question of Tchaikovsky's style.

In what does Nationalism precisely consist? If the employment of folk-tunes in the first generation results in the formation of a style generated by the stylistic features of the original folk-tunes in future generations, it would appear a little premature as yet to seek for any definite signs of the perpetuation of the national manner in the music of Russian composers. At the moment of writing there are comparatively few in whose works this resultant style can be traced. For the present it may merely be surmised that if this quality of the folk-song as music is to be reflected in the works in which the folk-song style is to appear, then the Russian folk-song has a good deal to recommend it as the basis of such an art; and if folk-melodies could ever reflect the soul of a nation the Russian folk-song is the one most likely to voice national and racial characteristics.

Without going very far into a comparison between the merits of the Russian popular melody and those of our own land it must be immediately conceded that whereas in the first case the gramophone has only served on behalf of the collector, in the other it has endangered the very existence of any spontaneous and original song-making activity by carrying among the rural population a type of music originally designed for no better purpose than that of commerce. And even if this class of melody should undergo the process of modification and selection held to constitute its "communalisation" it can become nothing better than a base thing, unless communalised out of all recogni-



tion To communalise a vice is nothing more satisfactory than the coming of a new method of practising that vice, a method which, though characteristic of a particular locality, is none the better for that.

Tchaikovsky frequently made use of folk-tunes, but he employed them in a manner associated with Western tradition. It seems more than likely that his transactions with Balakireff, the nature of which is revealed in the correspondence which lasted from 1868 until 1891, may have turned his attention to a source which might otherwise not have attracted him, but whatever it was that suggested the use of popular melodies as basic material for certain compositions, he was rarely successful in imparting to their treatment the special complexion requisite for the preservation of their character as an indigenous product.

But, apart from the question of folk-music, is Tchaikovsky to be regarded as voicing in his music the soul of the nation to which he belongs?

It would be idle to deny the quality of individuality in his work, but it is a personal individuality and not a racial.

It is of course quite easy to understand that as Tchaikovsky's music was so long the sole representative of any kind of Russian musical thought, its style was for a time closely associated in Western Europe, as it still is in England, with the psychological characteristics of the Russian.

In reality, however, Tchaikovsky's music reflects hardly anything else than his own very distinct personality—a personality lacking in more than one characteristic attribute of the Russian.

In order to dispel the deep-rooted notion that Tchai-

kovsky himself was typically Russian, let us inquire into the predominating characteristics of the Russian people. "The great Russian," says Mr. Maurice Baring, "was the pioneer of the Slav race." Speaking of the climatic influences of Great Russia upon the character formation of its people, he holds that "it leads them firstly to battle with the hostile forces of nature, for battle with them he must, as far as possible, in order to live, and consequently the struggle develops in him qualities of tenacity, energy and strength; and secondly, it leads him to bow down and submit to the overwhelming and insuperable forces of nature, against which all struggle is hopeless. Thus it is that he develops qualities of patience, resignation and weakness. This, again, accounts for that mixture in the Russian which more than all things puzzles the Western European, namely, the blend of roughness and good nature, of kindness and brutal insensibility . . . . In the face of obstacles, not a natural hardness, but the stoicism which the bitterness of the struggle has taught him, gets the upper hand."

In this last phrase lies something germane to our discussion. Where is the stoicism of the man whose every woe is expressed in his music? Again, we are told by the same writer of the wide appreciation on the part of Russians of the comic genius of foreign countries. After mentioning the popularity of J. K. Jerome, W. W. Jacobs, Kipling and Chesterton, Mr. Baring assures us that it is neither the problems nor the sociological interest of Shaw that so captivate the Russian public, but his Irish wit!

\* "The Russian People" (Methuen).

In the work of a Rimsky-Korsakoff we do not go far without perceiving a reflection of this sense for humour. But neither the music nor the autobiographical material bequeathed us by Tchaikovsky gives us reason to suppose that humour is a vital part of the Russian character, and one has but to read the gloomiest of Gorky's plays or stories—to mention Gogol or Ostrovsky would be to score too facile a victory—to discover that without this humoristic sensibility we have but a poor Russian.

We have now to refute the last and most complete fallacy in the conventional estimate of the Russian character—an estimate which is derived as much from Tchaikovsky's music as from any other and equally misleading source.

In writing the sentence "pessimism is the keynote of Tchaikovsky's music" one seems to commit a gigantic plagiarism, for this verdict must have been delivered in a thousand analytical programmes. But in enunciating the equally true statement that pessimism is *not* the keynote of the gamut of virtues and defects forming the Russian character and that exuberance (either in the direction of pessimism or of light-hearted gaiety) *is* that keynote, one may confidently expect to see the fallacious estimate toppling to the table like the proverbial house of playing-cards.

In truth, there is, however, one particular trait common to our composer and the race to which he belongs, and that is plasticity, a capacity for assimilation, a suppleness of mind by which Mr. Baring and others account for the mentioned appreciation of things foreign. And expressed in the terms of our controversy, this characteristic is called eclecticism.

We arrive, therefore, by a somewhat tortuous though sufficiently well-lit path, at the conclusion that Tchaikovsky is a truly typical Russian in that he has an infinite capacity for writing in the styles of other nations. Let us now observe, however, the not unimportant distinction, that whereas the nationalist composers occasionally employed the vernacular to talk of other lands, Tchaikovsky almost invariably talked about himself.

Allusion has been made to the waning of Tchaikovsky's popularity, even in England, where for so long a time the quality of his work went unchallenged.

But even so late in the day as this, to point either to this or that theme in the "Pathetic" symphony, which by the few is regarded as a monument of vulgar sentimentality, as likely to be ultimately considered unworthy to form the foundation of a work cast in the symphonic mould, to the want of proportion in the piano concerto, where, forsaking a spuriously epic manner, the composer suddenly and quite inconsequently refers us to an unimportant episode from his own distinctly unheroic life, or to the blatant hysteria of the solemn "1812," is to invite the paralysing response that all this is a question of taste. To which our rejoinder is that the acclamation of Tchaikovsky is called forth by his orchestral works because he was a master as well as a pioneer of orchestration; that brilliant and effective instrumentation is capable of covering a multitude of banalities and *clichés* and that as soon as Tchaikovsky is deprived of this prop, his distinction evaporates instantaneously.

The question of Nationalism and Eclecticism becomes insignificant so far as it concerns this composer when we inquire into the quality of his output. A great

deal of it appears to have been genuinely inspired. But however important a factor inspiration may be in the composition of a work of art, its product must always depend for its immortality upon the *quality of the inspiration* rather than its mere presence.

In approaching the subject of Anton Rubinstein we are freed from any necessity of passing a verdict upon his creative powers. The almost complete absence of his works from the present-day European concert-giver's programme is sufficiently eloquent in itself to obviate all need of argument. Rubinstein, a Jew and a Slav, belonged to two races in which the faculty of assimilation is very highly developed; but the mixture in his case would appear to have had an antidotal effect, and to this we must attribute the circumstance of his having consistently followed the line of German tradition—in his day the line of least resistance. To call Rubinstein an eclectic would be merely to strain the meaning of the term for the political purpose of placing him in antiposition to the Nationalists. In the capacity of operatic composer, he accorded a somewhat scanty recognition to the principle of setting native texts. Eleven of his nineteen operas are based upon foreign subjects and we have the authority of Cheshikin for supposing that "The Demon," for the story of which he went to Lermontoff, was the direct outcome of the encouragement given by the authorities to national opera in the case of "Boris Godounoff." Rubinstein, it is interesting to note, sought the opinion of Balakireff's circle upon this work, but they, it seems, were impressed more by the able manner in which he rendered his reproduction of the score at the piano than by the music itself.

One gathers that his brother, Nicholas, was by many considered to be his superior as virtuoso as well as in musical judgment, but that Nicholas's appetite for social enjoyments was such as to militate against the expenditure of a due amount of applicative energy in the more important sphere

Before leaving these composers it must be admitted that they have served their turn in attracting the attention of Western Europe towards Russian music proper. It is indeed very doubtful whether, but for the interest in the works of Tchaikovsky, manifested by Russian society, the operas of Rimsky-Korsakoff which are now becoming popular in Russia, would ever have gained anything but a strictly limited public notice. In England, it is easy to see, we are indebted to the sensationalism of "1812" and to the sentimentalism of the "Pathetic" symphony for the presence of a large proportion of our present overflowing "Promenade" audiences, which, one is bound to admit, contain many who were first attracted to symphonic music by the sensuous or the programmatic rather than the intellectual appeal of such works.

To give Tchaikovsky his full due as a benefactor of Russian music we must recall the circumstance that, at the opening of the reign of Alexander III, only three of his operas had been performed and only one of Rimsky-Korsakoff's. It will readily be understood that the combined eight works of Glinka, Dargomijsky and Seroff and the then existing specimens of Cui, were hardly sufficient to preserve a strong interest in the opera as a Russian product, and even taking Rubinstein into account we find that only seven of the twelve works written prior to 1881 were based upon subjects

likely to suggest to the Russian public that they were properly to be considered as national. It is quite natural, therefore, that on its advent, Tchaikovsky's operatic music should have gained the approval of Alexander. He took a great interest in the art, and Russian society was at that time disposed to follow in the Imperial footsteps in such matters. The more or less immediate appeal of Tchaikovsky's musical idiom may be held to account for the circumstance that it was to his works that the advantage of frequent performance fell between the years 1882 and 1898. Seeing, then, that Tchaikovsky wrote for his own and Rimsky-Korsakoff for a future, if not a distant, generation, it would seem that but for the former the budding interest in Russian opera could hardly have been kept alive. If he masqueraded as a composer of Russian music (and even of "good" music) he did so to really good purpose, and now that genuine Russian music is coming into its own it behoves us to remember that, but for him, the later operas of Rimsky-Korsakoff—a very important national product—might never have been heard in the country of their origin.

## V

## TANEIEFF

HAVING classified Arensky as a Nationalist *manqué* we must balance matters by considering the subject of this chapter as a universalist *à l'ouï*.

Serge Ivanovich Tancieff, born in the government of Vladimir on November 13, 1856, manifested early in life the possession of those very qualities, such, for instance, as an assimilative capacity, which justify our estimating him as an eclectic and which enabled him to earn no small reputation for versatility in the interpretation of the compositions of others. His faculty of discernment when assessing the merits of a musical work was valued by none more than Tchaikovsky, who often submitted his compositions to the judgment of his young friend and never took offence at the strictures so frequently passed upon them. At the age of ten, Tancieff entered the Moscow Conservatoire and began taking lessons under Langer. His aptitude was such as to gain the notice of Nicholas Rubinstein, whose influence was subsequently brought to bear on



the lad's parents, with the result that the plan of interrupting his musical studies in order that he might enter a public school was abandoned. Continuing, therefore, in the conservatoire, he was able to perfect himself in the subjects of form and composition under the guidance respectively of Hubert and Tchaikovsky, while his pianistic talent was so well fostered by the director himself, that in 1875 he won the gold medal for solo-playing and made a triumphant debut in Brahms's piano concerto. "Besides purity and strength of touch, grace and ease of execution, Taneieff astonished everyone by his maturity of intellect, his self-control, and the calm, objective style of his interpretation." Thus Tchaikovsky, who, some months later, was able to congratulate the young virtuoso on the "power to grasp the composer's intention in all its most delicate and minute details" evinced in the execution of his own concerto.

Shortly after this, Taneieff embarked on a long Russian tour with Auer, the celebrated violinist, and the years 1877-8 were spent in concert-giving in Paris and in certain musical centres in the Baltic provinces.

In 1878 he succeeded Tchaikovsky as professor of orchestration at his *alma mater* and on the death of Nicholas Rubinstein was appointed to succeed him in the piano professorship. In 1885, Tchaikovsky, failing to induce Rimsky-Korsakoff to accept the directorship, offered that position to Taneieff, who held it for four years, retiring, in favour of Safonoff, with the object of devoting himself to composition. Tchaikovsky further assisted his protégé by himself serving under him on the staff.

The leisure secured by retirement from his arduous

directorial and professional duties has been fruitful only in a limited degree, for several compositions conceived in symphonic form have yet to be published. In addition to the six known string quartets, of which the third is the most favoured by public performers, there are two such works still in manuscript. His other chamber-works include two string quintets in which he alternately doubles the 'cello and viola parts, a string trio (two violins and violin), Op. 21, and a piano trio, Op. 22. His operatic trilogy on the Orestes of Æschylus was produced at St. Petersburg in 1895.

Taneieff as a composer cannot be said to appeal to the heart. There is much to be admired in the structure of his compositions, and his ingenuity in ringing rhythmic changes tempts one to make a comparison (with Brahms) which cannot, however, be taken any further. He has nothing at all of the sensuous charm which constitutes the essentially appealing quality of his master's music, and his merit as composer lies in the sphere of unusual technical proficiency.

His book on counterpoint is freely used and much esteemed in Russian educational establishments.

We have now to consider a composer who may be reckoned as forming a link between the former tradition of Occidentalism, once so jealously guarded in the citadel of the Moscow Conservatoire, and the present musical movement in Russia. The internecine war between Nationalism and Universalism, modified in its second stage to a more or less friendly rivalry, has now completely subsided, and while Russian musicians individually are rather inclined to devote themselves to a search for new mediums of musical expression than to either of the ideals of the later nineteenth century,

the music of Russia as a whole claims the support of all its creative exponents in its purpose of destroying the high wall which has too long defied progress in many parts of Western Europe. The composer here referred to is Rachmaninoff. He may well be called upon to figure as the first subject of the concluding section of this volume.



PART IV.  
THE PRESENT MOVEMENT.



## I.

### RACHMANINOFF.

FOR reasons that have already been hinted at, any attempt to place the large number of present-day Russian composers in definite categories must end in comparative failure. At the time of Tchaikovsky's death it seemed likely that the traditions of the Moscow school would be carried on by certain young members who had already made their mark as composers. But we are constantly being reminded that if a splendid musicianship can be looked upon as a peculiar characteristic of the Russian school in general by virtue of the invariable association of that quality with Russian composers of to-day, the highly developed faculty of eclecticism has gone far towards the extinction of anything which could be considered as lending a nationalistic flavour to their output. The glow and enthusiasm of Rachmaninoff's earlier manner have paled and have been superseded by a more or less austere, though energetic, academicism. Glère, at one time not a little inclined toward the nationalistic method and in some of whose earlier compositions may

nevertheless he noticed the Muscovite conservative tendency, which became stronger than otherwise it might through having taken to itself the rôle of protestantism calculated to provide a corrective against the "over-advanced" methods of the Koutchikisti. has now been attracted by the allurements of French mysticism. Scriabin, once a somewhat too pronounced admirer of Chopin, has embarked upon an exploration of a new musical territory in order to find a suitable harmonic edifice as cathedral for his theosophic faith. Vissilenko, despite his Moscow schooling, adopted for a time the ideals of the Nationalists and imitated their manner; but he has since contracted other sympathies and with true Slavonic plasticity of mind has followed in the France-ward footsteps of the other similarly disposed Russians. Grechaninoff, who studied in both schools, seems now unable to decide which to follow.

Of the St. Petersburg group, Akimenko, one of Korsakoff's pupils, is also betraying a French tendency, one far more marked than that of Glière. The same may be said of Tcherepnin. As to Stravinsky, estimated by Korsakoff as a pupil of no great promise, he has, while still quite young, established himself by means of solid achievement as a sort of post-nationalist.

Of the older school, Ippolitoff-Ivanoff, who migrated from St. Petersburg to Tiflis and thence as a conductor to Moscow, has sympathised very actively, so far as the production of nationalistic opera is concerned, with the ideals which he was taught to revere, and somewhat mildly also, as a composer, while Wihtol has devoted himself whole-heartedly to the establishment of a musical nationality for the Lett.



Worthy of mention as emphasising the difficulty of classification and revealing the variegated complexion of contemporary Russian music, are Steinberg, who, though taught for some time by Korsakoff, has shaken off that influence, and Medtner, whose German origin must surely account in a large measure—and obviously a good deal more than his Moscow training—for his thoroughly Brahmsian style. Medtner is one of many Russian composers who have not yet gained any considerable reputation in Western Europe. Like so many others who, though in a sense "inglorious," are by no means mute, his output is of an exceedingly high quality.

And indeed no greater tribute could be paid to the consistent excellence of the present-day school of Russian composition than mention of the difficulties to be met with by the conscientious compiler of a brief list of sterling composers.

Serge Vassilievich Rachmaninoff is descended from a family of the landed class owning an estate in the Government of Novgorod, where he was born on March 20, 1873. He gave an early hint as to his true vocation, and at nine years of age he was already a student in the St. Petersburg Conservatoire. Before reaching his 'teens, however, he was removed to the Moscow Institution, where he studied with Zvircff, Siloti (his kinsman), Tancieff and Arensky. Here he remained for seven years, during which time he developed himself particularly as a virtuoso on the piano and as a versatile composer. At the close of his studentship in 1892, he had already won high opinions as a performer, and the award of the gold medal for composition, made in respect of his one-act opera,

"Aleko" (after Pushkin), performed at Moscow in the following year, gave him every reason to expect a brilliant career.

After a long concert-tour of Russia, he settled down in Moscow, receiving the appointment of professor at the Maryinsky Institute for Girls, which he held for some ten years.

In 1897 he took over the conductorship of a private operatic concern in Moscow, the duties connected with which occupation necessitating a cessation of his work as composer during the two years' term of his engagement.

To what extent Rachmaninoff, as composer, would have gained the ear of Western Europe without the fortunate inspiration which gave birth to the C sharp minor Prelude, it is difficult to determine. One may conjecture the opinion that, in England at least, quite as much interest is aroused in an audience by the likelihood of his being persuaded to give an authoritative reading of this trifle as by the hearing of a concerto or a symphony from his pen. When he first visited London, in the triple rôle of performer, composer and conductor, he quickly revealed to subscribers of the Philharmonic Society that his fame ought not to rest upon this slender pedestal. He had of course already won a properly-founded reputation in Russia.

In 1901 his second piano concerto was produced at Moscow—the composer as soloist—and in the following season it was introduced by Siloti at St. Petersburg. The cantata based on Nekrassoff's poem, "Spring," composed and produced at about this time, was given four years or so later at St. Petersburg, in which performance the principal rôle was sustained by

Chalyapin. In 1904 he again undertook a two years' engagement as conductor, the scene of his labours this time being the Imperial Opera at Moscow. Once more, however, he found that the demand on his time was such as to leave no leisure for creative work. Eventually resigning this post, he took up residence in Dresden and has since devoted himself to composition, concert-playing and conducting. He is now a regular visitor to England and has made several appearances in such provincial centres as Liverpool, where his second symphony was performed in 1911; Leeds, where in the same year the festival committee found a place for his third piano concerto and the above-mentioned symphony; Bradford, Manchester and Sheffield.

Rachmaninoff has made essays in all the important branches of composition. His contribution to chamber music is somewhat slender, but the "elegiac" trio (in memory of Tchaikovsky), which, together with a couple of instrumental sonatas, constitutes the whole of his output under this head, is a work which has quickly gained the approval of those who have sampled its quality. For the orchestra, in addition to the works already enumerated, there are "The Rock," a fantasia, Op. 7 (after Lermontoff), the first symphony, a Bohemian caprice and a symphonic poem, "The Island of the Dead," which is reputed to be one of his finest works. He has written many charming pieces for piano which would not be at any disadvantage in comparison with the popular prelude, and it is satisfactory to note that pianists are beginning to make a practical comparison. The set of six "Moments Musicaux," an early work, is individualistic in manner to an extent emphasising the remarkable modification that has

taken place in the composer's style; the Preludes, Op. 23, set an executive task suggesting that his own technical accomplishments have erased all recollection of the limitations of others. He has written a sonata and besides two suites for two pianos, there are six pieces, Op. 11, for four hands. Another work deserving inclusion here is the set of variations on a theme of Chopin.

There are a number of charming songs, that entitled "Lilacs" (No. 5 of Op. 21) being a favourite, while the "Fate" song, Op. 17, an ingenious attempt (but not a very successful one at utilising the subject of Beethoven's fifth symphony as thematic and poetic material) has attracted the attention of recitalists by reason, no doubt, of the factitious interest lent by its scheme.

Since "Aleko," which earned him his prize, Rachmaninoff has written two more single-act operas, "The Covetous Knight" and "Francesca da Rimini," both of which were revived in Moscow during the season of 1913. A new choral work, founded on E. A. Poe's "The Bells," has lately been given with great success in St. Petersburg and is promised an early English performance.

As performer, Rachmanninoff profits by some very hard work which has given him an amazing strength of wrist, a seemingly inexhaustible reserve of power, and a technique in general which has very few equals among pianists of the present time.

## II

### GLIÈRE AND IPPOLITOFF-IVANOFF.

**R**HEINHOLD GLIÈRE, born at Kieff on January 11, 1875, has contrived to puzzle the classifiers. Educated at Moscow, where he studied with Taneieff and Ippolitoff-Ivanoff, he came naturally under the influence of Tchaikovsky; yet, in his work, both prior to and since the symphonic poem, "The Sirens"—in which a sympathy with French ideals shows him somewhat at a disadvantage—we discover a certain method warranting the assumption that he is not altogether wanting in a regard for the accredited founders of the modern school. In the first of his two string quartets, that in A numbered Op. 2, is to be observed a striving after the rationalistic manner, but an absence of ruggedness from the treatment of the themes, which are clearly derived from a folk origin, remind us that the composer's early environment has not been without effect. One is inclined to surmise that Glière has succumbed to the glamour of such success as has been attained by Arensky, whose style of treatment is reflected in his work, and to conjecture

that under a different influence he might have proved capable of more significant things.

As a composer of solo instrumental music he is perhaps seen at his weakest. His piano pieces reveal a preoccupation with the merely pedagogic, and those written for the orchestral instruments have hardly a strong claim to our notice beyond their value as items in the curriculum. His duets for violins, for 'cellos and for violin and 'cello (all unaccompanied), in which he again shows here and there a preference for themes of a folk-song nature, his string sextets and octet bear witness to an affection for the bowed instruments to the repertoires of which they form a pleasing acquisition. He has been an industrious song-writer and is to be credited with a choral suite (for women's voices), having the four seasons as its poetic basis.

His symphonic work is on a much higher plane than that in the above categories. His first symphony, Op. 8, in E flat, composed in 1899, when still a student, and performed at Moscow in 1902 and later in London, has, together with the quartets, been the means of drawing the notice of amateurs to the composer's work and of leading them, one may say, to expect rather more from him than he has yet given us. The second symphony has not yet, so far as we are aware, been heard in England. "The Sirens," viewed as an attempt to express the turbulence of the ocean, has perhaps something of the commonplace in its harmonic colouring; in the orchestration, however, we recognise that mastery characteristic of the young Russian.

Quite lately there has been produced in Moscow a work which, by virtue of its subject, places him among the creators of musical epics. It is a symphony or

symphonic suite based upon the legend of Ilia Mouro-metz, a figure familiar from his prominent appearances in the cycle of Kieff, the composer's native city. Here we see Glière emulating Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakoff in their historical and legendary operatic essays. The latter's "Sadko," it will be remembered, draws its literary material from the cycle of Novgorod.

Glière occupies his time in teaching and composing. He lives in Moscow.

Ippolitoff-Ivanoff has lately made himself known to followers of the symphonic branch of the musical art in England by his "Caucasian Sketches," but his name has been long familiar to lovers of chamber music by reason of his string quartet, Op. 13. In his own country, however, he is widely known and esteemed as an influential and liberal-minded administrator. He seems in this capacity to have preserved an attitude of independence in regard to the antagonism which for a time existed between the two musical factions in his native land, and if there is not perhaps a great deal in his music which would indicate a profound respect for the initiators of the modern school, he has certainly proved a good friend of Nationalism.

Michael Mikhaelovich Ippolitoff-Ivanoff was born at Gatchina on November 15, 1859. The son of a mechanic employed at the Imperial Palace, he is quite an exceptional figure in the ranks of Russian creative musicians, for they have, for the most part, been recruited from the upper class. After six years' study under Rimsky-Korsakoff at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire, he proceeded, in 1882, to Tiflis as director of the Music School and conductor of the symphony concerts of the Imperial Musical Society, from which

coign he exercised an influence not less important than that of Ropartz in Nancy. There, however, the analogy would appear to end, for Ivanoff, instead of expressing his home sickness in most of his compositions, like the exiled Breton, he set himself to acquire a familiarity with the musical idiom of the Caucasus, eventually publishing a volume dealing with the national songs of Georgia. Anyone desirous of getting a glimpse of this country as it appears to the vision of a musician, is recommended to consult the descriptive letter written by Tchaikovsky when bound on a visit to Ivanoff, with whom he was on friendly terms. (He had produced "Mazeppa" in Tiflis.)

In 1890 Ivanoff, evidently anxious to secure a more central position in Russian musical life, wrote to Tchaikovsky, sounding him as to the likelihood of success meeting his application for the post of professor at Moscow, but it transpired that the rumoured resignation of Altani, which had prompted the suggestion, was not founded on fact. At the end of the same year Tchaikovsky made representations on Ivanoff's behalf to the Intendant of the St. Petersburg Imperial Opera with the primary object of obtaining a hearing for the latter's second opera, "Asra," produced at about that time in Tiflis, and with a secondary aim, no doubt, of creating an interest in Ivanoff's work. It was not, however, until 1893, that room was found for him on the conservatoire staff at Moscow. Arrived there, he succeeded to the position of conductor of the Choral Society. This he held until 1899, when he took over the command at the Moscow Private Opera. His policy there may be epitomised by quoting the operas chosen for his benefit performance in 1903: Korsakoff's



"Kostchei" and Tchaikovsky's "Iolanthe" During its most flourishing period no less than five of Korsakoff's operas were mounted

There is no slight evidence of Ivanoff's sympathy with the procedure of deriving the literary basis of music from the homeland. His first work, produced soon after his graduation, the overture, "Yar Khmel," is founded on a Russian theme; the "Caucasian Sketches" are full of suggestions of that Eastern flavour so characteristic of Russian pictorial music; his third opera, "Assya," is a setting of a national tale by Tourgenieff; there are three cantatas, each in memory of a great Russian poet, and the three Moorish melodies, Op. 23, for voice, testify further to his feeling for oriental colour, as does the suite, Op. 20. His latest works include "Iveria," Op. 42, and an Armenian Rhapsody, Op. 48.

Ivanoff, whose wife is a well-known singer, is now principal of the Moscow Conservatoire in succession to Safonoff, who resigned in 1906.

### III.

#### SCRIABIN.

[T is a little curious that, beginning with Wagner, musicians who have employed music as a means of portraying some phase of life, have all been greeted with derision. Strauss, we believe, never achieved the distinction of being actually hissed, but that failure may be accounted for when we recall that at the time of his first appearance in concert programmes, the progressive movements in the other arts, such as "impressionism," did not receive the same publicity as they now do, and consequently the average music-lover, who in the early nineties cared less than at present for modern painting and sculpture, did not arrive at the same degree of exasperation as has lately been produced by the simultaneous appearances of "revolution" or "anarchy" in the work of the Futurists and the French pioneers, on the one hand, and in that of Schonberg, Stravinsky and Scriabin on the other.

In England the name of Scriabin has suddenly sprung into a belated notoriety that, but for what appears to have been a disinclination on the part of a

festival committee to "face" his music, would by now perhaps have been planed down into fame. If, however, we look into his history we find that, like all the revolutionary composers, his development to the point of so-called anarchy has been quite gradual. One is bound, nevertheless, to admit that, viewed as a product of modern Russian musical society, he is distinctly a phenomenon. Born in Moscow on December 25, 1871, he passed through a vicissitude of vocation, similar in kind, though not in degree, to that experienced by Rimsky-Korsakoff and Moussorgsky. Having followed for a time the course of preparation for the military career chosen for him by his parents, the call of music became so insistent that he left the Cadet Corps and became a student at the Moscow Conservatoire. Like Taneieff, with whom he first studied, and Rachmaninoff, he had a marked talent as pianist.

The compositions belonging to his first period are devoid of any suggestion of tutorial influence; the early preludes, mazurkas and impromptus are indeed, as their generic titles might lead one to suppose, the outcome of a very strong affection for the music of Chopin, though the uncharitable implication of Cui, who speaks of them as objects annexed from the trousseau of the Polish master, is not quite fair, failing, as it does, to take account of certain indisputable evidences of individuality.

For a time his pianistic talent held sway, and on leaving the Conservatoire (taking the gold medal in 1892) he began a tour of Europe, which served to prove that the combination of his own natural ability and Safonoff's instruction had produced a remarkable virtuosity. Unsatisfied, after a time, with the life of a

public performer, he returned to Moscow and accepted the professorship of piano then offered him. In 1903 his absorption in a very advanced method of musical creation dictated his resignation.

In his earliest compositions --the Chopinesque piano pieces--one has little difficulty in discovering an indebtedness to a poetic idea which has not been allowed to intrude to the extent rendering necessary an avowal of programme. In the piano concerto composed in 1897 and produced at St. Petersburg in the following year --the andante and variations of which are based on a theme which occurred to him when only twelve years of age, there are few signs of anything in the nature of programmatic significance, while in the first symphony (in E major) if the hymn of praise, apotheosising art and religion, which constitutes the choral finale is to be considered as a hint of coming developments, there is nothing conspicuous, so far as style is concerned, beyond the fairly plain testimony to Wagnerian influence.

In the "Poème Satanique," for piano, we hear echoes of the manner of Liszt. The second symphony, however, was devoted to a definite idea and the foundation of its abstract programme --the development of psychic individuality synchronised very appropriately with the beginning of the composer's true self-realisation. Here is to be remarked a stylistic transformation which definitely anticipates the psychological basis as well as the technical manner of subsequent works. The third symphony embarks on a discussion of the faculty of art-creation. It is in three movements, entitled respectively: "Strife," "Sensuous Joys" and "Divine Activity."

It is supposed that it was whilst occupied with the composition of his succeeding work, "The Poem of Ecstasy," that Scriabin first perceived the resemblance between certain colour and sound combinations from which partly sprang the conception of the later "Poem of Fire." It contains, moreover, the germ of the harmonic idea of the last mentioned. But in the "Poem of Ecstasy" he seems to have been chiefly occupied with the question of the musical reflection of thought and feeling. In reference to this Mrs. Newmarch's veiled implication that the composer's printed demands are rather in excess of the degrees of emotional sensibility to be discovered among the units of an orchestra is irresistible, though perhaps now out of date.

In "Prometheus" Scriabin has arrived at a full development of the harmonic scale system of harmonisation. This he now definitely allies with the musical enunciation of theosophical principles, together with an avowed belief in an affinity existing between sound and colour. As to the first idea, we see nothing in it more startling than Debussy's exploitation of the tonal scale, which he felt best suited to express his own feelings—feelings which pertained in reality to the soul of intellectual France at the *fin de siècle*—a period plainly reflected in his music. That every sensitive musician recognises a vague resemblance between colour and harmonic schemes is a commonplace, the truth of which is denied alone by those whom we should never dream of crediting with such sensitiveness. The majority of musicians, it is true, are as chary of committing themselves to any downright statement touching upon the scheme followed by their expression of

sound in terms of colour or vice versa as at one time they would have been of publishing an experimental departure from the approved diatonic scale. Scriabin has had the temerity to associate himself with a belief in both and into the bargain has come forward as a twentieth century apostle of Wagner and Strauss by investing his music—and thus proclaiming his satisfaction with its efficacy as a medium—with an ethic message.

To deliver judgment on the result is for the moment hardly wise, because while the theosophical content of the work may conceivably have touched a responsive chord in those who are conversant with and sensible to the teachings of that faith, the musical idiom is for the present so novel and so inseparable from the "programme" of the work that it behoves those who are outside the radius of its influence to keep silence, at least until the musical manner has become sufficiently familiar to make an intellectual appeal.

"Prometheus," produced early in 1911, at Moscow, has a programme not altogether unrelated to the ethical lesson of Wagner's "Ring." Essentially, it is in accord with the canons of theosophy. It suggests in poetic terms that human creative power is the complementary faculty in mankind, that this power has possibilities of evil as well as of good. Technically, the novelty of the work consists in its structure being confined to the harmonic scale. Scriabin has used a very large orchestra which includes eight horns, five trumpets, an extensive "percussion" group, celesta and harp, and is reinforced by the organ. The solo piano part is given the programmatic rôle of the human individual; the orchestra is occupied in enumerating the

influences bearing on mankind. But this does not exhaust the full instrumental catalogue for Scriabin has designed a separate part for a colour instrument, dedicated to the function of making a colour-commentary upon the harmonic occurrences: thus we are told that "the characteristic mystical chord"—the ninth with the augmented fifth—will be accompanied by a complementary bluish-lilac haze.

Nor is the end here, for "Prometheus," which no longer excites discussion in Russia, is to be succeeded by a more daring experiment. In a work now in process of design—called a "mystery"—Scriabin has the intention of using every available means of appealing to the emotional sensibilities. The dance and perfume are to be called upon to reinforce tone and colour, with the object of producing the fullest possible effect upon the senses and mind of the audience, which, like an ideal congregation, will, it is anticipated, be stirred to a pitch of ecstasy by a combined sensuous impulsion.

Seeing that programme music has survived its alarming exploitation in the suburban drawing-room of the Victorian era and that Straussian developments are no longer goading the academic composer into the perpetration of ponderous symphonies of ridicule, we may surely hope for a reasonable attitude toward the new accessorial function to which music has been called by Scriabin. After all there is nothing very novel about the effect either of music, perfume or colour upon the mind, and if the deliberate combination of these sense excitements should prove a social danger, that in itself would be the best possible proof of its success.

In his piano sonatas Scriabin's development is to be followed more or less closely. The fifth, sixth and

seventh works in this form, Op. 53, 62 and 64, provide ample substance in which to study the elaboration of his harmonic scheme. In the first-named, the composer is apparently experimenting (it was written prior to "Prometheus"), but an analysis of the others reveals that he had then decided upon the serviceableness of his medium. He has now written, in all, ten sonatas.

Scriabin's one tiny contribution to the literature of string chamber music—his variation on the popular Russian theme treated by a number of composers in collaboration—is liable to be forgotten in the stir he is creating in the domains of orchestral and piano music. In any case it is a document of no great value to the historian or the musician—it is not even the sole instance of his employment of the diatonic scale.



## IV

### VASSILENKO AND GRECHANINOFF

OF Sergius Vassilenko nothing, we believe, has been heard in England beyond his comparatively nature work, the suite entitled "Au Soleil," and one or two songs. In the former we are able to see how far-reaching has been the effect of French influence on some Russian composers. The impressionistic movement may almost be likened to the Napoleonic. It has certainly been the cause of considerable damage to the musico-nationalistic Kremlin--the folk-song style. While that is not perhaps a subject for unreserved regret, it is a pity that the native manner, originating in the combined employment of folk rhythms and popular legends, should be blotted out by something which has in reality a deal of the Latin and nothing of the Slav about its character.

Vassilenko was born at Moscow in 1872, entered the Conservatoire in 1896 and after five years' work under Taneeff and Ippolitoff-Ivanoff, wrote a cantata, for which he was awarded the gold medal. The work was shortly afterwards re-cast and produced in Moscow as

an opera. The choice of its subject, identical with that of Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Kitej," would have been a satisfactory sign of faith in a composer brought up under the wing of any member of the Koutchka. In Cheshikin's opinion the choice itself testifies to Vassilenko's quite laudable sympathy with Korsakoff, but the historian notices a musical resemblance between the works, which is just a little too marked. If it be at all true, the allegation that Vassilenko's early works are "talented echoes of Korsakoff, Porodin and Moussorgsky," suggests that in them the present eclecticism as well as the Tchaikovskian manner of expression must have been hardly noticeable.

In his epic poem for orchestra, Op. 4, he exhibited a taste and a talent for mediævalism which received support from a profound knowledge of modal and church music, but his later works—they include "The Whirlpool" and "The Widow" (both "poems" for bass voice and orchestra) and a symphony in G minor—are cited as evidence of restlessness subsequently confirmed by the style of his symphonic poem based on Wilde's "Garden of Death," in which he altogether relinquished his earlier manner.

In "Au Soleil," far from showing any signs of discomfort consequent on the adoption of a foreign idiom, he appears to be thoroughly at home and the music warms his picture into life just as the sun vitalises the insects in that picture—endowing them with movement by its life-giving rays. The aim and the achievement both recall Albert Roussel's "Festin d'Arraignée."

Two new symphonic works are announced as having been successfully performed in Paris and Moscow.

In his studies, Alexander Tikhonovich Grechaninoff

reversed the order pursued by Rachmaninoff. He was born on October 13, 1864, in Moscow. Having established a claim to the consideration of local musical society by following Safonoff's piano course at the conservatoire, he transferred his attention in 1890 to the rival establishment at St. Petersburg, where he became a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakoff. His studies completed, he composed a quartet which in the following year gained the prize offered by the St. Petersburg Chamber-Music Society. Although he excels in the composition of sacred music, it is by his songs and his two quartets (the second is numbered Op. 14) that he has come to be known outside Russia. In his later vocal specimens he inclines at times to what may best be described as an advanced Schumannesque style, at others to the more delicate and sometimes mystical manner of Borodin.

As a dramatic composer he has been fairly industrious, and has written incidental music to Ostrovsky's "Snow-Maiden" and to the first two sections of Alexis Tolstoi's dramatic trilogy, "The Death of Ivan the Terrible," "Czar Feodor" and "Czar Boris." Respecting the first-named, Cheshikin avers that it was written while the composer was under the influence of Rimsky-Korsakoff, a suggestion to which colour is certainly lent by its subject, but the chiding given Grechaninoff by Lipacff, another critic, who complains of the lack of originality—a quality elsewhere sufficiently noticeable—displayed in the choice of literary material already employed by two great composers (Tchaikovsky was, of course, the other), seems undeserved, if the precedent of "Faust" is of any importance.

Grechaninoff has written two operas. The first, called

"Dobrynya Nikitich," is drawn from the Kieff cycle, in which the hero, whose name supplies the title, figures along with "Ilya Mourometz"—the subject of Glière's symphonic suite—and "Aleosha Popovich," the principal personage in Alexander Tancieff's opera. This was produced at St Petersburg in 1903. The circumstances attending the recent production of his new opera at Moscow (based on Maeterlinck's poem, "Sister Beatrice") have created something of a stir. This work had only been performed four times—with considerable success—when it was banned, on the score of its involving the stage impersonation of the Holy Virgin. This echoes the assertion lately penned in an article on Russia, that "you may be pious," within that Empire's confines, "but you must not go too far."

Grechaninoff has published two symphonies, Opus 6 and 27, but apparently withholds in manuscript an orchestral "Elegie," Op 18.

# V

## AKIMENKO, TCHEREPNIN AND REBIKOFF

WE have had occasion more than once to refer to the extent to which Russian composers have been attracted by the modern French movement. When it is remembered that it was to Russia that the French school owed its salvation from an absolute surrender to the Wagnerian deluge which in the 'eighties of last century all but swamped the frail bark manned by truly original musicians, it does not seem inappropriate that Russians of to-day should evince an anxiety to try their pens in an idiom largely derived from their own progenitors.

But the secession of Feodor Akimenko is the more remarkable because he was reared in an atmosphere of Nationalism. Born at Kharkoff on February 8, 1876, he received his early education in the St. Petersburg Imperial Chapel; he then had private piano lessons from Balakireff and studied harmony with Liadoff. Later, on entering the conservatoire, he was placed in Rimsky-Korsakoff's composition class. If Nationalism is to be fostered by tutorial environment, Akimenko

should have outdone any single one of his teachers. But even in his earlier works he does not show any particular fancy for the folk-melody procedure, although in some of them there is a fairly pronounced Russian flavour, and when after composing a goodly number of songs and piano pieces, a "Lyric Poem" for orchestra, three choruses for mixed voices to texts of A. Tolstoi and Maikoff), various solos for string and wind instruments, a string trio and a piano and violin sonata, he left his native land and journeyed via Switzerland to Paris, he became a thorough devotee of Impressionism—as, indeed the titles of his later works bear witness. To those who are not inclined to accept their mere names as conclusive evidence as to their style, a perusal of the "Pages de Poésie Fantastique," Op. 43 (for piano), will suffice to present the composer's later manner. The pieces, Op. 41, "In the Gardens of the Luxembourg" and "Under the Arches of Notre Dame," suggest that Akimenko forgot for a time such inspirational territory as the works of Tolstoi and Maikoff. His latest compositions are chiefly for piano and include a "Sonata Fantastique," but one act of an opera, as yet unpublished, "The Queen of the Alps," has been given a concert performance at Kharkoff, and he has been at work upon a ballet. For both of these the libretto has been supplied by Mr. Calvocoressi.

Tcherepnin, whose name has been familiarised by the popularity of his two ballets, "Le Pavillon d'Armide" and "Narcisse," has been called "an eclectic in the best sense." To understand what is here implied it is sufficient to glance at a list of the composer's works, for they reveal a considerable breadth of outlook in the choice of subject. One of his first compositions is an

overture to the "Princesse Lointaine" of Rostand. The "Dramatic Fantasia," Op. 17, for orchestra, is inspired by a poem of Tioutscheff, a compatriot, who has written verses on Nature as seen in Russia, which are so highly praised by a biographer that the latter's subsequent use of the epithet *occidental* to describe the poet—on the score of his knowledge and taste for the French language—seems both unfair and far-fetched.

Then there are the orchestral works describing the witches' scene in "Macbeth," the ballet, "Le Pavillon d'Armide," which deals with the period of Louis XIV, and "Narcisse," which, together with the song, "Menaceus," reveals an insight into and a sympathy with classical folk-lore. We may note also that one of the "sketches" for piano, Op. 38, is entitled "Baba Yaga," which suggests that the composer's eclecticism is of the kind that fulfils all obligations by beginning at home.

Nicholas Tcherepnin was born in 1873. He abandoned his studies for the legal profession—at St. Petersburg University—to become a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakoff. He has an individual style which adapts itself easily to the demand of its possessor's versatility.

Vladimir Rebukoff, born on May 16, 1866, at Krasnoyarsk, in Siberia, stands on a lower plane than Scriabin, but invites comparison with the latter in one respect. He also is addicted to the suggestion of soul-states in music and does not stop at the smaller forms, such as his "Musical Psychological Sketches" for piano ("Slavery and Freedom" is one of the titles in the series Op. 13), but gives the same adjectival qualification to his one-act opera, "The Christmas Tree," in which the pleasures of the wealthy are contrasted with

the misery of the submerged. The musical substance of this work, being physically founded on whole-tone harmonies, seems somewhat unsuitable for its poetic purpose, although, to judge by its reception, Moscow audiences found nothing incongruous in the combination. Two more "psychological" dramas have to be credited to him, "Thea," Op. 34, in four acts, and a setting of Schnitzler's "Woman with the Dagger," Op. 41. Rebikoff's piano pieces, which have become pretty well known in England and France, are largely couched in the same harmonic terms.

Psychology as mistress to the handmaiden, Music, suggests Scriabin, and the tonal scale Debussy, but it must be mentioned that Rebikoff has enlarged the scope of musical composition on his own account. The "melo-mimic" is a combination of the scenic and pantomimic with a closely allied musical accompaniment. In this form he has published the six "melo-mimics" or "mimo-dramas," Op. 11, based on the tale, "Mila and Noll," and "Genius and Death." The latter has been well received in Russia and is described as deriving a good deal of help—as one would imagine more likely than in "The Christmas Tree" from the esoteric quality of the music. Rebikoff has also written an opera in two acts, "The Storm," produced at Odessa during his residence there (1894).

He was a pupil of Mühler in Berlin, and Jaksch in Vienna. In 1898 he founded a branch of the Imperial Musical Society at Kishineff, but has since given up all administrative in order to devote himself entirely to creative work.



## VI.

### STEINBERG, MEDTNER AND CATOIRE.

TWO musicians whose output owes nothing to such sources of programmatic foundation as symbolism and impressionism and is free from both nationalistic import and Eastern flavour, and who are thus alike separated from the rest of the Russian school, are Steinberg and Medtner.

Maximilian Steinberg was born in 1883. One would hardly imagine that a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakoff, who was on such terms with the distinguished teacher as marriage into his immediate family would suggest, would betray so slight a stylistic resemblance or so small a similarity of aim. Steinberg's music seems even to outdo that of his second teacher, Glazounoff, in its close adherence to orthodoxy. As one might suppose, a pupil of such thorough craftsmen is endowed with a fine technique, and this Steinberg displays in his earliest works. The Quartet, Op. 5, is quite a masterly effort, but savours rather more of the pedagogue than of the inspired musician. It is exceedingly well written for the instruments but never

risks above the level of technical perfection. Report speaks well of his second symphony in B minor and of some songs.

Nicholas Medtner, who resembles Steinberg in the negative direction cited, has nothing in common with him beyond the implied adherence to academicism. In Medtner we find traditional methods allied with and enhanced by a genuine inspiration which is of the most refined quality. One feels that he enjoys his music as he writes it. He has all the rhythmic ingenuity of Brahms, some quite individual harmonic thoughts, an impeccable taste and abundant enthusiasm. But he has so far confined his output to the domain of chamber-music, and as that branch of the art has not yet succeeded in establishing itself with the public as the most aristocratic, and is still regarded as Cinderella, his reputation up to the present has not been far-reaching.

Medtner, as his name suggests, is the child of German parents. He was born in Moscow on December 24, 1879, and began his musical education at the Conservatoire at the age of twelve. After a long course of study with Safonoff he wound up his career as a student by carrying off the gold medal, and in the same year (1900), he obtained first honours in the Rubinstein competition at Vienna. After distinguishing himself as pianist in many European musical centres, he was appointed in 1902 to a professorship in the Moscow Conservatoire, but gave up this post after one year's retention in order to apply himself exclusively to composition. Most of his published works are for piano. The style of his first sonata is as close as possible to that of Brahms, so close, in fact, that one might easily

imagine the similarity of opus number and key (Opus 5 in F minor) between this work and one in the same form by the German master to have been prompted by feelings of admiration and a desire for emulation. Medtner has not allowed himself to be fettered by formalistic considerations, and the work quoted is the only sonata of six in which he preserves the traditional division into movements. Excepted is the very charming example for piano and violin, Op. 21, in B minor, the three sections of which are named respectively "Canzona," "Danza" and "Ditirambo." For these instruments he has also written a beautiful series of three nocturnes which deserve to be heard much oftener.

The title "Dithyramb" is one of four very much favoured by the composer, several pieces being given the respective descriptions of "Märchen," "Novellen" and "Tragödie-Fragment." A large number of fine songs stand to his credit, the texts being from such poets as Goethe, Heine and Nietzsche.

Isolated in a sense is Catoire, who betrays his origin as clearly in his music as by his name. Here also is a French tendency, but one which causes us to inquire into the composer's age, for it belongs rather to the period when Fauré was in the forefront than to that of the out-and-out impressionists.

George Catoire was born in Moscow on April 27, 1861. Whilst following the university mathematical course in Berlin, he studied music under Klindworth and Willborg. Later he became a pupil of Liadoff in St. Petersburg, and his early work indicates that if he owes his technical proficiency to his first teachers, his tastes were influenced by the St. Petersburg environment. The symphonic poem, "Mzyri" (Op. 13), takes

the work of Lermontoff as its theme, and in his cantata, "Russalka," he again turns to this poet. Other compositions belonging to the first period are a C minor Symphony, Op. 7, a Trio, Op. 14, some piano pieces and songs, three poems of Tioutscheff, set for female chorus and piano (Op. 18) and three more for vocal solo. His later instrumental works include a fine string Quintet (Op. 16), four Preludes for piano (Op. 17), a "Poème" sonata for piano and violin (Op. 20) in D, and a piano Concerto (Op. 21).

Catoire is resident in Moscow.

## VII

### STRAVINSKY

[T]his has been argued that the searching test of the principle of Nationalism—so far as concerns the incorporation of folk-tunes in the music of a given country or race—comes when, in the second generation, the practice of employing the melodies themselves gives way to that rhythmic manner and character which, it is held, should be born of the union between folk and art music. In Russia, despite the very special encouragement given to this method of cultivating a national manner, there are singularly few evidences of the existence, at the present time, of the confidently anticipated offspring—a child, to continue the metaphor, expected to prove virile and healthy.

It is perhaps because Igor Stravinsky belongs also to the second musical generation in the actual sense—he is the son of a musician—that it has fallen to his lot to keep alive a race which but for him might easily have become extinct. We have seen that the Russian school, at the beginning of the twentieth century, is represented by composers who have gone to France, Germany, Belgium and England for literary material, to the whole-tone scale as a medium in which to express that mysticism which, it has been argued, is in reality

as much Russian as foreign, and merits all the more, therefore, one would suppose, a purely national mode of expression, to the "harmonic" scale as a suitable musical robe in which to officiate at the altar of theosophy and finally to Germany, as in the case of some who appear altogether indifferent to the claims of nationality, not only for technique but for the renewal of their attenuated store of inventive ideas at the fount of tradition!

A native tendency to preserve a national character in his music and a very firm intention of passing beyond the boundaries so jealously guarded by the academics, who, like the rich, are always with us and are continually threatening to "corner" progress, are alike observable in Stravinsky. We have, moreover, to observe that the practice of drawing upon national subjects has not resulted in any noticeable exhaustion either of his own inspiration or of the stock of literary material to be culled from that source. It cannot be said that Stravinsky has removed all tangible traces of the original folk-song from his music; he has actually made use of complete examples. But this does not detract from the value of his work as an example of how a national manner may pass from the primitive to the secondary stage without in the least hampering the development or impeding the inspiration of the composer. For this reason we select him—a composer who has come to be regarded as the hope of Russian musical Nationalism—as the final figure in this volume.

Igor Fedorovich Stravinsky was born at Oranienbaum on June 5, 1882. He is the son of Fedor Ignatievich Stravinsky, the celebrated singer associated with the Imperial (Maryinsky) Theatre in St. Petersburg.

At the age of nine the boy was already giving proofs of natural musicianship and showed a particular aptitude for piano playing, to the study of which he devoted himself for a long time. In 1902, while travelling abroad, he had the good fortune to fall in with Rimsky-Korsakoff and this meeting marks an epoch in his life. He began a course of study with the eminent professor, and although their views on the sphere of the art of music did not always coincide, the pupil made good use of his opportunities and perfected himself rapidly in the technique of composition. His first essay was a symphony composed in 1907, which has never been published, but is now, it appears, to be rescued from obscurity by public performance in Switzerland. This was followed by a vocal suite with piano accompaniment to the text of Pushkin's "Faun and Shepherdess." In 1908 came the "Scherzo Fantastique" for orchestra, the symphonic fantasia, "Fireworks," which, by a curious freak of artistic judgment, has been submitted for the approval of an English manufacturer of Chinese crackers, a work in memory of Rimsky-Korsakoff (written on the death of his master), the four strange piano-studies which foreshadow the coming harmonic individuality, and three songs, one of which is the favourite "Pastorale." In 1909 he wrote the work which at the moment of writing is promised for performance during the projected season of Russian opera in London. This is in a revised form and takes shape as a combination of opera and ballet. It is based on Hans Andersen's fairy-tale, "The Nightingale." The two succeeding years saw the production of works which have made Stravinsky famous. The ballet, "The Firebird," has for its "plot" a legend

which introduces once more to our notice the characters of Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Kostchei," and once again we see the beautiful Tsarevna rescued from her hideous captor through Ivan's fortunate discovery of Kostchei's "death." In the music there is nothing of the so-called "anarchistic" tendency which is to be found in his later work. An individuality of expression, a wonderful charm of manner and a complete sureness in technique are its principal features. Here, as elsewhere, the composer shows a complete grasp of the possibilities of depicting the movement of life, both physical and psychological, in music. "The Firebird" was produced in Paris in 1910. The second of the works dating from 1910-11 is another ballet, "Petruschka." Hearing this work one begins to understand that one is dealing with a composer whose horror of anything in the nature of *cliché* is adequately supported by his spontaneity of invention; he has chosen a subject which might well have been vulgarised by its treatment in a vein of ponderous humour. Instead, we have something savouring of the delicate irony of Ravel and of Anatole France. "Petruschka" (a blended counterpart of the English "Punch" and the Russian "Durak") is a story of love and hate in that fanciful domain in which we become aware of the existence of a soul hitherto considered absent from such a corporeal habitation. The scene is a carnival, and among the mingled crowd of roysterers and mountebanks a showman, practised in the "black art," has erected his booth. In it are three animated dolls: the dance, "with the pinkest of waxen cheeks and the glassiest of stares," is flanked by a fierce blackamoor and the simple fool Petruschka. These three enact a tragedy of jealousy which termin-



ates in the shedding of Petrouschka's vital sawdust. This ballet is, properly speaking, a travesty of human passion expressed in terms of puppet gestures and illumined by music as expositor. The carnival music is a sheer joy and the incidents making a demand upon music as a depictive medium have been treated not merely with marvellous skill but with unfailing instinct for the true satiric touch. "Petrouschka" is, in fact, the musical presentment of Russian fantastic humour in the second generation. There is none of the heavy scoring once necessary to reveal the humorous possibilities of some particular situation; Stravinsky lives in a world which has learned to take certain things for granted, and his method is elliptical. This perception of proportion in humour is one of the surest indications of refinement, and "Petrouschka" not only testifies to the composer's possession of this quality, but provides an assurance that he has a technical equipment that can hardly betray him. "Petrouschka" was first given at the Chatelet Theatre in Paris in 1911.

The reception of "The Crowning of Spring," composed during the winter of 1912-3 and produced both in Paris and London in the following spring and summer, is fresh in the minds of those who participated in it. In this work Stravinsky has manifested a conviction that, despite the prevailing bias in favour of things as they are, music is an art which must progress and that its evolution, like that of mankind to whom it ministers, is a natural condition of its existence. "The Crowning of Spring" has been described as the ritual of an imaginary religion, but there is a touch of actuality which connects the subject-matter with the beliefs of pagan Russia. It has two scenes, in which the rites

devoted to the sun god Yarilo (whom we remember as the figure manacing and finally terminating the existence of Snegourochka in Korsakoff's opera) are celebrated. In setting this subject Stravinsky has turned his back on everything in the nature of conventional music and has given us a score which at the first hearing appears to confine itself to a rhythmical commentary upon the stage movement. In criticising the work the mistake was made of suggesting that Stravinsky's music had gone back to an elemental stage in an endeavour to provide an appropriate setting for the pre-historic. In reality, of course, the movement was forward, in that music was used in a sphere to which it had hitherto been strange. That is progress. A composer who sets "The Creation" to living music is just as progressive as another who takes "The Last Judgment" as his theme.

As a writer of songs, Stravinsky has gone to work in much the same spirit as that informing his compositions for orchestra. The two songs, Opus 6, "The Cloister," in which he makes use of a bell effect—a device rendered familiar by its use by Korsakoff, Moussorgsky, Borodin and other Russian composers—and "The Song of the Dew," which incorporates the traditional flagellants' song, are by no means as striking to the ear as the Verlaine example, Op. 9, with its effect of crude fifths; in fact, the first-mentioned has a commonplace phrase or two—an uncommon blemish in the work of this composer. The two Balmont poems and the three recent Japanese songs with small orchestra are plainly the work of a composer who has no respect for the academic prejudice. To the list of compositions mentioned must be added a cantata completed in 1911.

## VIII.

### OPERATIC AND CONCERT ENTERPRISES.

THE regime from which the Paris State Opera-house is now happily emerging has its counterpart in the management of the Imperial Theatres of St. Petersburg and Moscow, which are under government authority. Like most institutions of the kind, their administration is thoroughly clogged by conservatism and private prejudices. To this is added the traditional governmental fear of enlightenment. It may have suggested itself to the reader that the banning of Grechaninoff's opera, "Sister Beatrice," is not to be regarded as a peculiar product of Russian obscurantism, seeing that much nearer home we were long deprived of witnessing operas in which biblical personages appear; but it must be borne in mind that in Russia it is not merely the impersonation of sacred characters that is objected to, and also that the mere substitution of secular names for such personages would not satisfy the objectors as in this country; it is that the diseased mind of the bureaucrat fears every manifestation suggestive of freedom of thought, so that any dramatic

work which has in any sense an ethical or exegetical function is in danger of summary extinction. As an illustration it is only necessary to recall the difficulties raised in respect of "Parsifal" productions.

A very striking example of prejudice is the belated recognition of Moussorgsky's "Khovantchina." This work was not produced by the Imperial Theatres until some twenty years after its publication in the Rimsky-Korsakoff version. Its presentation at Moscow took place *after its London performances* and at St. Petersburg only a month or so before. It seems odd, too, to read of Puccini's "Madame Butterfly" among the "novelties" of last season at St. Petersburg.

Fortunately the operatic art is not left to the by no means tender care of the Imperial authorities. The "private" operas in both the old capital and the new are doing useful work towards the encouragement of progress in the musico-dramatic art and in the domain of ballet. The private institution in Moscow, for instance, produced "Khovantchina" many years ago, and also gave the first performances of Rimsky-Korsakoff's last opera, "The Golden Cock," which was banned by the Imperial directorate. That it has been at all possible to see a performance of the same composer's "Sadko" in recent times is due to the private enterprise known as the Theatre of Music Drama in St. Petersburg. It has also fallen to the lot of Mr. Zimin, who presides over the destinies of the Moscow private concern (the Solodovnikoff Theatre) to mount both "Mlada" and "Czar Saltan."

When we inquire into the state of popular taste in the sphere of opera, we meet with very positive evidence of the popularity of Tchaïkovsky's music. Both at the

Imperial Theatre and at Zimin's establishment, his operas are recognised as being the best "draw," and in response to demand they (and his ballets also) have been given more often than those of any other composer. Rimsky-Korsakoff follows closely behind. Two of Rubinstein's operas have been recently revived, but were pronounced inept. What strikes one as exceedingly strange and a little melancholy is, that apart from the two composers first mentioned, there were one hundred and thirty-three performances of foreign opera to thirty-one native. This may be due to the scarcity of new works by living composers; on the other hand, and what is more probable, it may be the cause of it.

A different state of things prevails in the "Popular" theatres of St Petersburg and Moscow, institutions designed for the purpose of cultivating musical taste among the masses—an enterprise which succeeds better than when attempted among the aristocracy. At these establishments the demand for native opera is larger and the supply of Russian and foreign works has been in exactly the same proportion.

No account of Russian concert undertakings would be complete without a special reference to the work of M. P. Belaieff, whose name has occurred with sufficient frequency in this volume and in such connection as to suggest the breadth of his influence in Russian musical affairs.

Mitrophan Petrovich Belaieff was born on February 22, 1836, at St. Petersburg. He received a good musical education, and even as a child was attracted to chamber-music, but it was not until he was nearly fifty years of age that he retired from the timber concern inherited from his father—exchanging proprietorship

for the less burdensome rôle of shareholder—and devoted himself exclusively to music. He died on January 10, 1904, leaving a number of endowed musical institutions as a monument of his activity and benevolence.

Among them are the Russian symphony concerts and chamber-music evenings. These are run by an advisory committee, consisting of three musicians qualified to exercise a wise selection of music. The first members of this triumvirate were Korsakoff, Liadoff and Glazounoff. Wihtol, Ossovsky and Pogojeff are the present officials with Artciboucheff as chairman.

The extent to which Russian music benefits by the provision of this Mæcenas is best to be estimated by an enumeration of the several objects of his legacy. The "Belaieff Edition" is devoted to the publication of worthy native works. The "Glinka prizes" are awarded on the anniversary of the production of "A Life for the Czar" and "Russlan and Ludmilla" (both first performed on November 27), for orchestral and chamber works. The annual chamber-music competitions have for their object the cultivation of quartet composition. Not least is the philanthropical scheme designed to relieve necessitous musicians.

Concert undertakings both in St. Petersburg and Moscow are in a very thriving condition, artistically and financially. In addition to the schemes endowed by Belaieff, St. Petersburg has its free Sunday evening concerts, which have been running for some fifteen years and are being continued, thanks to the beneficence of Count Shermetieff, who has lately made himself responsible for the requisite funds. The Imperial Russian Musical Society is active not only in St. Peters-

burg and Moscow, where its concerts are usually conducted either by Safonoff, Emile Cooper or Ippolitoff-Ivanoff, but in other centres in different parts of the Empire. In both capitals there are series of concerts given by Mr. Kussevitzsky, who divides his programmes into classic and modern sections, and by Siloti, the eminent pianist, who also looks after the interests of chamber-music. The conductorship of the Moscow Philharmonic Society is distributed among several eminent musicians, among whom Safonoff and Rachmaninoff may be mentioned.\* Both Kussevitzsky and Vasilenko provide "popular" Sunday concerts at which symphonic music is to be heard at a trifling cost; the latter series is arranged historically. The choral concerts of the Imperial Society are directed by Cooper and Glazounoff. There is a new chamber-music society in Moscow, which devotes itself to classic and modern works of all nationalities, and a number of societies and private individuals vie with each other in making known music of worth in every possible direction. Madame d'Alheim occupies herself actively with the propagation of the art-song.

From this short account of musical affairs it is easy to perceive that the present prominent position of Russia in the musical world is likely to be upheld for some time to come.

Between the above picture—drawn perhaps a little

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\* Mr. Chevillard, the well-known Paris conductor, found himself obliged, some years back, when reporting Russian progress, after a tour, to make some strictures upon the standard of orchestral playing. He attributed certain faults to the practice of dispensing with a regular conductor.

angularly—and that of musical society in Russia prior to the unfolding of the Nationalist banner, there is a contrast which, without knowledge of the circumstances contributing to this amazing development, might easily give rise to scornful disbelief, to a suggestion that the bright colours of the present or the gloomy ones of the past are laid on in response to the dictates of a feverish imagination.

Had Balakireff dared to foretell, during his first confabulation with Cui, such a rosy future as has evolved about his schemes, he might easily have been regarded as the living prototype of the optimistic Dodon in "The Golden Cock."

The author brings his labours to a close with the hope that the present volume, whatever be its limitations, will at least provide a chronicle adequate to the purpose of showing that this phenomenon—the Russian musical movement—is not the work of a magician who in one night has raised the most active and progressive school of composition in the world, but is the fruit of fifty years of unremitting labour in the pursuit of an ideal.



## APPENDIXES.



## APPENDIX I.

### ALPHABETICAL LIST OF COMPOSERS NOT DEALT WITH IN THE FOREGOING PAGES.

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ALFHERAKY, A. Comes from Kharkoff, in the  
(1846). centre of the Ukraine, and is partial to its folk-songs. Confines himself to the piano and the voice. Has published songs to Russian texts of Pushkin, Tolstoi and Lermontoff; also to those of Heine, Hugo, Musset and Goethe.

AMANI, N. A pupil of Rimsky-Korsakoff. Combined Ukrainian folk-song and Orientalism as inspiration. Wrote principally for piano. The Themes with Variations, Op. 3, the Suite, Op. 4, and Three Preludes, Op. 8, and "Album for the Young," Op. 15, are all for this instrument. Op. 1 is a string trio.

ARTCIBOUCHEFF, N. Has written slight works for orchestra, such as "Valse Fantasia," Op. 9. Is represented in the "Vendredi" collection and the joint "Variations on a Popular Theme"

(both for string quartet). Three "Melodies" to texts of Pushkin, Nikitin and Fett.

BLARAMBERG, P. I. Was for a time a journalist.  
(1841). A friend and pupil of Balakireff. Wrote incidental music to Ostrovsky's "Voyevoda" and a cantata on Lermontoff's "Demon." His operatic works include "Mary of Burgundy" (Hugo), "The Mummers," "Russalka," "Tushino" (Ostrovsky). Cheshikin styles him "melodist." Other works include a fantasia, "The Dragon Flies," for solo, chorus and orchestra, a musical sketch, "On the Volga," for male chorus and orchestra, symphonic poem, "The Dying Gladiator," a symphony in B minor and a sinfonietta, a few folk-songs for chorus, unaccompanied, and several songs.

PLEICHMANN, J. I. Pupil of Solovieff and Rimsky-Korsakoff at St. Petersburg,  
(1868-1909). and of Reinecke and Jadassohn at Leipzig. Composer of songs of a "popular" type, of piano and violin pieces, a piano sonata, Op. 15, another with violin, an orchestral suite and a sacred work for solo voices, chorus and orchestra, "Sebastian the Martyr." Has also given an operatic setting to Rostand's "Princesse Lointaine."

BLUMENFELD, F. Allied with the "Nationalists."  
(1863). Has held the post of conductor at the Imperial Opera, St. Petersburg. Composer of an "Allegro de Concert" in A, for piano and orchestra, a Symphony in C, Op. 39, and an orchestral mazurka; songs to Russian texts and Byron; many piano pieces, studies and preludes in all keys. A

Quartet, Op. 26, in F, and his contributions to the collaborative quartets represent his chamber-music.

EWALD, V. Was the 'cellist at the Belaieff Friday  
(1860). meetings and has contributed to the  
"Vendredis" collection. Has also  
written a Quartet (Op. 1), a Quintet (Op. 4), and some  
'cello pieces.

GNISSIN, M. A young representative of the pre-  
sent movement. His works evince a  
German tendency. They include a "Symphonic Frag-  
ment after Shelley," Op. 4, a Sonata-ballad in C sharp  
minor for piano and 'cello Op. 7, and some valuable songs.  
Gniessin was awarded one of the "Glinka" prizes in  
1913 for his symphonic poem, "Wrubel."

GOEDICKE, A. Has composed two symphonies,  
Opus 15 and 16, a Dramatic Over-  
ture, Op. 7, a Piano Trio, Op. 14, a Piano and Violin  
Sonata, Op. 10, a Piano Sonata, Op. 18, a "Concert-  
stück" with orchestra, and small pieces, including a  
prelude after Maeterlinck's "The Blind."

ILYNSKY, A. A. Studied under Kullak and Bar-  
(1859). giel at Berlin. Was for a time pro-  
fessor at the Moscow Philharmonic  
Society's music school. His orchestral works include  
Croatian dances, a Symphonic Scherzo, Op. 3, and an  
"Overture to Czar Feodor" (from A. Tolstoi's trilogy).  
Has composed an opera on Pushkin's "Fountain of the  
Bakchisserai," a string quartet, a suite for two pianos  
on "Nour and Anitra," Op. 13 (since arranged for or-  
chestra) and various violin and piano pieces.

JUON, P. Lives in Berlin. His recent works include two Piano Quintets, Opus 33 and (1872). 44, a "Divertimento," for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon and piano, a Piano Rhapsody, Op. 37, a Concerto for 'cello, Op. 45, one for violin and smaller piano works.

KALINNIKOFF, V. S. Studied at the Moscow Philharmonic Society's school under (1866-1900). Ilynsky and Blaramberg. Was then offered post of assistant-conductor at the Italian Opera, but shortly afterwards died of consumption and the effects of semi-starvation. He wrote two symphonies (in G minor and A), of which the first is now often played, and other orchestral works; incidental music to A. Tolstoi's "Czar Boris" (from the trilogy), "Russalka," a ballad for solo voice, chorus and orchestra, a tone-poem, "The Cedar and the Palm," a quartet and two miniatures for string quartet with double-bass *ad libitum* (he was a fellow-student of Mr. Kussevitzsky, the celebrated contra-bassist and conductor), and some songs and piano pieces.

KARATIGIN, W. G. Edited Moussorgsky's post-humour works. Has also written some songs with a folk-lore basis. Is a "polisher" who apparently exercises great discrimination in the publication of his own output.

KAZACHENKO, G. A. Studied for nine years with (1858). Rimsky-Korsakoff and has arranged the latter's opera, "Snegourochka," for piano. An instrumental and vocal composer, has written an opera, "Prince Serebreny" (A. Tolstoi), which was produced at St. Peters-

burg in 1892. Is chorus-master at St. Petersburg Imperial Opera.

KASHKIN, N. D. Teacher and critic, and author of "Reminiscences of Tchaikovsky." Taught himself until 1860, when he took lessons from Dubuque, and was subsequently appointed to the staff of Moscow Conservatoire. A close friend of Tchaikovsky.

KOPYLOFF, A. Was a pupil of Liadoff. His orchestral works include a Symphony in C major, Op. 14, a Scherzo, Op. 10, and a Concert-overture, Op. 41. Has published two Quartets, Opus 15 and 23, an Andantino and Prelude and Fugue on the name Belaieff, some songs, unaccompanied choruses and piano pieces. Among the latter are those (Op. 52) entitled "Pictures of Child Life."

KORESTSCHENKO, A. N. Gold medallist of Moscow Conservatoire for both piano and theory, which he studied with Tanieff and Arensky respectively. Is now himself professor of harmony at that institution. Has written three operas, a ballet, "The Magic Mirror," some incidental music, a number of orchestral works, including a "Lyric Symphony," Georgian and Armenian songs (with orchestra), a "Prologue" celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Moscow Conservatoire, a string quartet, a large number of songs and some piano and violin pieces. His style resembles that of Tchaikovsky and Arensky.

KRYJANOVSKY, J. Belongs to the present-day movement and is an eclectic. His

output is small and is chiefly for piano. There is an excellent sonata for piano and violin, Op. 4.

LISSENKO, N. V. A pupil of Rimsky-Korsakoff.  
(1842). Has written several operas, and, like his master, has set Gogol's "Night in May" and "Christmas Eve." He has also taken the same author's "Tarass Boulba" as text.

MALICHEVSKY, W. Is one of the most important present-day composers. His music is virtually unknown in England, and has only been heard, we believe, in Bournemouth, where Mr. Godfrey has given performances of his first three symphonies, Opus 8 (in G), 10 (in A), and 14. He has published three Quartets, Opus 2, 3 and 6, and a Violin Sonata, Op. 1.

MELGOUNOFF, J. N. Was associated with Westphal in his effort to promote a proper understanding of rhythm. Joined Laub and then Davidoff as accompanist on their concert tours. He then devoted himself to the study of folk-song, discovered that the universal method of noting these melodies was wrong, and advocated their arrangement in accordance with the polyphonic rendering given by the people who sing them. Melgounoff wrote treatises on kindred subjects.

OSTROGLAZOFF, M. A determined though somewhat restless eclectic. A piano and violin sonata, Op. 10, displays considerable stylistic uncertainty. There is a "Crépuscule" for orchestra, Op. 11.

POGOJEFF, W. His chamber works, which are fairly well-known, include a theme



and variations for quartet, a "Quartetino" and another specimen for the same combination, in D. Has written a little for orchestra and a good deal for piano. For the last there are four fugues on "B A C H."

PROKOFIEFF, S.      A pupil of Glière and Liadoff;  
(1891).      he does not appear to have yet  
published anything for orchestra,  
but has written a one-act opera and a piano concerto.  
A piano sonata marked Op. 1 (1909) reminds us, even  
more forcibly than his birth-date, of his youth. The  
second Sonata, Op. 14 (1912) shows an immense advance on the earlier work.

SACHNOVSKY.      Like Prokofieff, belongs to the rising generation. His songs merit attention. A part-song, "The Pampas Grass," has lately been published.

SAFONOFF, V. I.      Studied theory with Zikke and  
(1852).      Zarembo, piano with Brassin, subsequently taking gold medal at St. Petersburg Conservatoire. Undertook extensive tour as pianist. After holding a sub-professorship at St. Petersburg went to Moscow, and in 1889 succeeded Taneieff as director. Since 1890, when he became conductor of the Moscow branch of the Russian Musical Society, has achieved world-wide fame. Was for three years conductor of New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Has formed several celebrated piano pupils, including Scriabin.

SENILOFF.      Pupil of Dr. Riemann in Leipzig and  
(1875).      later of Korsakoff and Glazounoff. Has preserved the style derived from his

earlier environment, but certain of his songs prove that he is alive to the importance of autochthonous material as literary substance. Has composed some symphonic poems.

SILOTI, A. After six years' study at Moscow (1863). Conservatoire under N. Rubinstein, Tchaikovsky and Hubert, became a pupil of Liszt. Was appointed professor at Moscow in 1880. Conducted the Philharmonic concerts there in 1901-2 and has appeared all over Europe as solo-pianist.

SOKOLOFF, N. A. Was a pupil of Korsakoff (1859). from 1877 to 1885, and was associated with the junior nationalists and with the Belaieff "Fridays" group. His chamber-music comprises three Quartets, Opus 7, in F, 14, in A, and 20, in D minor, a String Quintet, Op. 3, and a serenade on "Pelaieff." He also contributed to the "Vendredis" collection. For orchestra, there are the dramatic poem after Tolstoi's "Don Juan," and an *elégie* and a serenade for strings. He has written a ballet, "The Wild Swans," Op. 40, some choruses, a large number of songs and several pieces for violin, violoncello and piano, respectively.

SPENDIAROFF, A. Belongs to the neo-nationalists. Orchestral compositions which have gained attention are the symphonic *tableau*, "The Three Palm-Trees" (after Lermontoff) and "Sketches from the Crimea." Has published some works for small orchestra and some violin pieces.

STCHERBATCHEFF, N. V. Associated with the original "young Russian" circle and contributed a supplementary piece to the "Paraphrases" (initiated by Borodin). Is a prolific composer for piano and has set twelve poems of A. Tolstoi and Heine. His orchestral work consists of a Serenade, Op. 33, and two "Idylls."

TANEIEFF, A. S. A highly-placed State official, a friend of Glinka and later of Balakireff and Moussorgsky. First studied with Reichel at Dresden, and in 1886 began taking lessons with Rimsky-Korsakoff. His compositions have been widely performed. An opera, "Cupid's Revenge," is severely criticised by Cheshikin. He is credited with a nationalistic style in his later work and the trio and scherzo of his second Symphony, Op. 21, completed in 1902, is cited as an example. Has composed three symphonies, a symphonic *tableau*, "Aleosha Popovich," an overture to "Hamlet," three quartets, choruses, some violin pieces and several songs, and has orchestrated Sinding's "Dance Orientale" for its adaptation as ballet music.

TINIAKOFF, A. One of the younger school. Composer of piano music in the style of Scriabin as Chopinist, and some songs.

WIHTOL, J. A contemporary of Arensky as pupil of Johansen and Korsakoff. Has occupied himself largely with the popularisation of Lettish folk-tunes which he has made the basis of such compositions as the small Orchestral Suite, Op. 29, the Symphonic Tableau, Op. 4, the Fan-

tasia for violin, Op. 42, and the Variations for piano, Op. 6. In addition there are two works for orchestra, the "Dramatic Overture," Op. 21, and the "Spriditis" overture, Op. 37, a String Quartet, Op. 27, a piano sonata and several instrumental pieces and songs. He has served on the Belaieff committee and has contributed to both dedicatory quartet collections.

**ZELENSKY, L.** Of Polish extraction; his best known orchestral work is a suite of Polish dances. He has published a Trio for piano and clarinet and 'cello, Op. 3, some worthy songs and a number of instrumental pieces

**ZOLOTAREFF, B.** Is the composer of several orchestral works; included among them are a "Fête Villageoise," Op. 24, a Hebrew Rhapsody, Op. 7, and a Symphony, Op. 8. He has made an important contribution to the chamber repertory in the shape of four quartets and a string quintet, also a trio for violin, viola and piano. He is a distinguished song writer. There are some small piano pieces and a suite for violin. His music is nationalistic in tendency.

## APPENDIX II.

### DARGOMIJSKY'S "RUSSALKA."

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(a) "The Russalkas are female water-sprites, who occupy a position which corresponds in many respects with that filled by the elves and fairies of Western Europe. The origin of their name seems doubtful, but it appears to be connected with *rus*, an old Slavonic word for a stream, or with *ruslo*, the bed of a river, and with several other kindred words, such as *rosá*, dew, which have reference to water. They are generally represented under the form of beauteous maidens with full and snow-white bosoms, and with long and slender limbs. At times they emerge from the waters of the lake or river in which they dwell, and sit upon its banks, combing and plaiting their flowing locks, or they cling to a mill-wheel, and turn round with it amid the splash of the stream." (From W. R. S. Ralston's "Songs of the Russian People").

(b) The plot of "Russalka," which is in four acts, is

as follows: Natasha, a miller's daughter, is wooed by a young prince. She is in no doubt as to his sincerity and allows herself to become his wife in all but law. When she learns that her lover has been unable to free himself from the social obligation of marrying within his own rank she throws herself into the mill-stream, is drowned, and becomes a Russalka. In the second act the prince appears on the scene of his clandestine amours after an interval of two years of unhappy married life and is approached by a young Russalka who informs him that she is his child. At the mention of Natasha the recollection of his early passion is revived and for a time he vacillates between flight and reunion with his paramour. Before he is able to decide, the miller, who has been driven out of his senses by his daughter's betrayal, hurls the prince into the river.

## INDEX.

### A.

- Akimenko, 282, 303-4.  
 ———, choruses, 304.  
 ———, "Lyric Poem," 304.  
 ———, "Pages de poésie fantasque," 304.  
 ———, "Queen of the Alps," 304.  
 ———, "Sonate fantastique," 304.  
 Alabieff, 7.  
 Alexander I, 87.  
 ——— II, 104.  
 ——— III, 272-3.  
 D'Alheim, 321.  
 Altani, 290.  
 Anne (Empress), 5-6.  
 Araya, 5.  
 Arensky, 235, 240-1, 255-9, 274, 283, 287.  
 ———, *basso ostinato*, 257.  
 ———, "Dream on the Volga," 257.  
 ———, duets for two pianos, 259.  
 ———, fantasia on epic chants, 258-9.  
 ———, "Fountain of Baktchissarai," 258.  
 ———, "Nal and Damayanti," 259.  
 ———, "Night in Egypt," 258.

- Arensky, orchestral suite (third), 256.  
 ———, piano concerto, 256.  
 ———, piano quintet, 258.  
 ———, "Raphael," 258.  
 ———, string quartets, 256, 259.  
 ———, symphony (first), 256.  
 ———, "Traviata," 257.  
 ———, trio, 256, 259.  
 ———, variations (Op. 54), 256.  
 Artciboucheff, 320.  
 Asanchevsky, 117, 189.  
 Auber, 78.  
 Auer, 275.

### B.

- Balakireff, 28, 38-9, 63-73, 77, 79, 88, 91-2, 99, 119-20, 122, 125, 177, 181-4, 188, 194-5, 201-2, 240-2, 244, 247, 253-4, 258, 262, 265, 267, 271, 303, 322.  
 ———, Czechish overture, 67.  
 ———, "Bohemian" poem, 68.  
 ———, "Golden Fish," 72.  
 ———, "Islamey," 69.  
 ———, "King Lear," 67-8.  
 ———, "Russia," 68.  
 ———, Spanish overture, 70.  
 ———, "Selim's Song," 72.  
 ———, "Thamar," 68-71.

- Balmont, 316.  
 Bamberg, 77.  
 Baring, 268-9.  
 Basili, 14.  
 Beaumarchais, 214.  
 Beethoven, 4, 47, 103, 116.  
 Belaieff, 106, 230, 219, 242,  
     248-50, 319-20.  
 Bellaigue, 172-3.  
 Bellini, 66.  
 Belsky, 216, 227.  
 Benkendorff, 57-8.  
 Berezovsky, 6.  
 Berlioz, 1, 25, 32, 49, 60, 71-2,  
     264.  
 ———, "Harold in Italy," 71.  
 Bertin, 32.  
 Bertrand, 48, 53-4.  
 Bessel, 94.  
 Bilibin, 252.  
 Boehm, 11.  
 Boieldieu, 13.  
 Borodin, 2, 38, 63-5, 68, 70, 72,  
     80, 86-107, 117, 119, 121, 126,  
     150, 181-2, 188-9, 194, 200,  
     203, 212, 245, 247-8, 250, 289,  
     300, 316.  
 ———, Belaieff quartet, 106.  
 ———, "Czar's Betrothed,"  
     93.  
 ———, "Dim Forest," 93.  
 ———, "Dissonance," 93.  
 ———, "My Song is Bitter,"  
     93-4.  
 ———, "Paraphrases," 103,  
     195.  
 ———, "Prince Igor," 63, 94,  
     96-100, 103-4, 195, 200.  
 ———, "Queen of the Ocean,"  
     93.  
 ———, sextet, 90.  
 ———, "Sleeping Beauty,"  
     93.  
 ———, "Steppes of Central  
     Asia," 103.  
 ———, symphony (A minor),  
     106.  
 ———, symphony (E flat), 92.  
 Bortniansky, 6, 56.  
 Bourgault-Ducoudray, 242.  
 Brahms, 244, 276, 283.  
 Byron, 123.  
 C.  
 Calvocoressi, 27, 41, 128, 165-  
     175.  
 Catherine II, 5-6.  
 Catoire, 309-10.  
 ———, "Mzyri," 309.  
 ———, piano and violin so  
     ata, 310.  
 ———, piano concerto, 310.  
 ———, preludes, 310.  
 ———, quintet, 310.  
 ———, "Russalka," 310.  
 ———, symphony (C minor)  
     310.  
 ———, trio, 310.  
 ———, Tioutscheff poems, 31  
 Cavos, 5.  
 Chaliapin, 285.  
 Charpentier, 128.  
 Cheshikin, 185, 208, 212, 22  
     271, 300-1.  
 Chestakoff, 131, 183.  
 Chesterton, 268.  
 Chevchenko, 128.  
 Chopin, 72, 224, 250, 264, 28  
     293.  
 Combarieu, 149.  
 Cooper, 321.  
 Cui, 2, 36, 38, 40, 42, 51-2, 64  
     68, 72, 74-86, 94, 99, 103, 11  
     113, 119-20, 128, 150, 17  
     182, 185, 189-90, 195, 20  
     247, 260, 263, 265, 272, 28  
     322.  
 ———, "Angelo," 74, 80-1  
 ———, "Cedar," 82.  
 ———, "Feast in Plagn  
     time," 83.  
 ———, "Filibusterer," 82-4  
 ———, "Mam'selle Fifi," 8  
 ———, "Mandarin's Son," 1  
     120.  
 ———, "Music in Russia," 1  
     85.  
 ———, "Prisoner of the Ca  
     casus," 78, 81-2.



- Cui, "Ratcliff," 78, 81.  
 ———, "Saracen," 82-3.  
 ———, "Solemn March," 81.  
 ———, "The Rock," 82.

## D.

- Dargomijskÿ, 28, 30-41, 54, 63,  
 75, 77, 114, 119, 125, 128-32,  
 147, 180, 185, 189, 194, 213,  
 221, 265, 272.  
 ———, "Baba-Yaga," 44.  
 ———, "Dance of Mimmers,"  
 37.  
 ———, "Don Juan," 41.  
 ———, "Esmeralda," 32, 35.  
 ———, "Finnish Fantasia,"  
 44.  
 ———, "Kazachok," 37.  
 ———, "Russalka," 35, 37,  
 41, 43.  
 ———, "Russian Legend,"  
 37.  
 ———, "Stone-Guest," 38,  
 41, 43, 75, 99, 125, 130, 180,  
 185, 189.  
 ———, "Triumph of Bac-  
 chus," 34.  
 Debussy, 41, 169, 295, 306.  
 ———, "Pelleas et Meli-  
 sande," 41.  
 Dehn, 14, 28, 32.  
 Delibes, 95.  
 Dickens, 55.  
 Dio, 76.  
 Dumas, 76, 82.  
 ——— *fls.*, 257.

## E.

- Elenkovsky, 241.  
 Elizabeth (Empress), 5-6.

## F.

- Famyntsin, 127, 146, 263.  
 Fauré, 309.  
 Fetis, 30.  
 Field, 11, 115.  
 Flaubert, 124.

- Folk-songs, 68, 75, 253, 288,  
 299.  
 Fomin, 5.  
 ———, "Matinsky," 5.  
 Fouque, 63.  
 France, Anatole, 314.

## G.

- Galitzin, 12.  
 Galuppi, 6.  
 Gavrouschkievich, 89.  
 Giacometti, 50.  
 Glazounoff, 68, 100, 106-7, 200,  
 230, 235, 239-51, 307, 320-1.  
 ———, Antokolsky cantata,  
 248.  
 ———, Belaieff quartet, 106.  
 ———, "Carnival" overture,  
 247.  
 ———, "Cortège Solennel,"  
 247.  
 ———, "Delia," 248.  
 ———, "Desire," 248.  
 ———, fifth symphony, 247.  
 ———, Finnish fantasia, 246.  
 ———, first Greek overture,  
 242.  
 ———, first symphony, 243,  
 247.  
 ———, "Forest," 244-5.  
 ———, fourth symphony, 247.  
 ———, "Idylle," 247.  
 ———, "Kalevala Legend,"  
 246.  
 ———, "Kremlin," 244, 247.  
 ———, "Middle Ages" suite,  
 244, 246.  
 ———, "Nereid," 248.  
 ———, "Novelettes," 248.  
 ———, "Oriental Reverie,"  
 247.  
 ———, "Oriental Rhapsody,"  
 244, 247.  
 ———, "Oriental Romance,"  
 248.  
 ———, quartet in D, 242.  
 ———, quartets, 242, 248.  
 ———, "Raymonda," 244-6.

- Glazounoff, S.A.S.C.H.A.  
     suite, 242.  
     —, "Sea," 244, 247.  
     —, second Greek overture,  
         242, 247.  
     —, second symphony, 243,  
         247.  
     —, "Slavonic Festival,"  
         244, 248.  
     —, songs, Op. 59 and 60,  
         247.  
     —, "Stenka Razin,"  
         243-4, 247.  
     —, third symphony, 247.  
 Glière, 281-2, 287-9.  
     —, duets, two 'cellos, 288.  
     —, duets, two violins, 288.  
     —, duets, violin and 'cello,  
         288.  
     —, first symphony, 288.  
     —, Mourometz, 289, 302.  
     —, octet, 288.  
     —, quartets, 287-8.  
     —, "Seasons," 288.  
     —, second symphony, 288.  
     —, sextets, 288.  
     —, "Sirens," 287-8.  
 Glinka, 1, 8-30, 32, 35, 38-40,  
         43, 52, 54, 63-4, 67-8, 72-3,  
         119, 131, 180, 183, 234, 247-8,  
         252, 264, 272, 320.  
     —, "Jota Aragonesa," 27.  
     —, "Kamarinskaya," 27.  
     —, "Life for the Czar,"  
         8, 13, 15-8, 63, 67, 320.  
     —, "Night in Madrid,"  
         27.  
     —, "Prince Kholmsky,"  
         25.  
     —, "Russlan and Lud-  
         milla," 20-4, 63, 99, 245, 320.  
     —, "Tarass Boulba," 27.  
 Gluck, 108.  
 Goethe, 309.  
 Gogol, 15, 27, 43, 55, 128, 175,  
         195, 197, 206-7, 246, 269.  
 Golenicheff-Koutousoff, 169-71.  
 Gorky, 269.  
 Gounod, 59.
- Grechaninoff, 235, 282, 300-2.  
     —, "Aleosha Popovich,"  
         302.  
     —, "Czar Boris," 301.  
     —, "Czar Feodor," 301.  
     —, "Dobrynya Nikitich,"  
         302.  
     —, quartets, 301.  
     —, "Sister Beatrice,"  
         302, 317.  
     —, "Snow-maiden," 301.  
     —, symphonies, 302.  
 Griboiedoff, 43.  
 Grieg, 144.  
 Grove, 260.  
 Guciewicz, 76.  
 Guedeonoff (Prince), 87.  
 Guedeonoff, 94-5, 150, 203, 206.
- ### H.
- Halevy, 34, 53.  
 Hartmann, 140, 167, 169.  
 Heine, 78, 309.  
 Helena Pavlovna (Grand  
     Duchess), 206.  
 Herke, 116.  
 Hermann, 76.  
 Hubert, 275.  
 Hugo, 32, 76, 80, 117.  
     —, "Lucrezia Borgia,"  
         32.
- ### I.
- Ibsen, 87.  
 Ippolitoff-Ivanoff, 235, 282,  
         287, 289-91, 299, 321.  
     —, Armenian rhapsody,  
         291.  
     —, "Asra," 290.  
     —, "Assya," 291.  
     —, cantatas, 291.  
     —, "Caucasian Sketches,"  
         289, 291.  
     —, "Iveria," 291.  
     —, Moorish melodies, 291.  
     —, quartet, 289.  
     —, suite, 291.  
     —, "Yar Khmel," 291.

Ivanoff, 13.  
Ivanovsky, 121-2.

## J.

Jacobs, 268.  
Jaksch, 306.  
Jadoul, 105.  
Jerome, 268.  
Johansen, 251, 256.  
Joukovsky, 15-6, 57.

## K.

Kanillé, 182.  
Kantemir, 43.  
Karamzin, 133.  
Karmalina, 70.  
Kholodkoff, 241.  
Kipling, 181, 268.  
Klindworth, 309.  
Koltsoff, 127.  
Kondratieff, 132.  
Kontski, 241.  
Krouglikiff, 174, 263, 265.  
Kroupsky, 116, 143, 163.  
Kryloff, 43.  
Kukolnik, 25.  
Kussevitsky, 2, 321.

## L.

Lalo, P., 170.  
Lamoureux, 104.  
Langer, 274.  
Laroche, 93, 247.  
Lenz, von, 242.  
Leonoff, 176.  
Lermontoff, 69, 83, 186, 271, 285, 310.  
Liadoff, 68, 103, 106, 120, 175, 200, 235, 240, 248, 250-3, 303, 309, 320.  
——, "Amazons' Dance," 252.  
——, Antokolsky cantata, 248.  
——, "Arabesque," 252.  
——, "Baba-Yaga," 252.

Liadoff, Belaieff Birthday quartet, 250.  
——, Belaieff quartet, 106, 250.  
——, "Biroulki," 252.  
——, "Bride of Messina," 252.  
——, "Enchanted Lake," 252.  
——, Maeterlinck suite, 252.  
——, orchestral songs, 252.  
——, "Paraphrases," 250.  
——, polonaise, 252.  
——, Schumann's "Carnival," 250.  
——, "Sylphides, Les," 250.  
——, variations for quartet, 250.  
——, "Vendredi," 250.  
Liadoff, C., 120, 251.  
Liapounoff, 71, 240, 252-4.  
——, "Concert Overture," 253.  
——, "Divertissements," 254.  
——, "Etudes transcendentes," 254.  
——, folk-songs, 253.  
——, "Ganges," 254.  
——, "On the Steppe," 254.  
——, "Oriental Romance," 254.  
——, piano concerto, 254.  
——, "Solemn Overture," 253-4.  
——, symphony, 253.  
——, symphonic poem, 253.  
——, Ukrainian rhapsody, 254.  
Lipaeff, 301.  
Lissenko, 207.  
Liszt, 25, 48, 64, 69, 71-3, 92, 101-4, 115, 150, 200, 242-3, 247, 254, 264, 294.  
Lomakin, 68.  
Lomonossoff, 5.  
Lvoff, 45, 56-60.  
——, "Bianca and Gualtiero," 59.  
——, "Duel," 59.

- Lvoff, "Embroideress," 59.  
 ———, soldiers' songs, 60.  
 ———, "Stabat Mater," 59.  
 ———, "Starosta Boris," 59.  
 ———, "Undine," 59.  
 ———, "Village Bailiff," 59.

## M.

- Maeterlinck, 252, 302.  
 Maikoff, 51, 235, 304.  
 Martini, 6.  
 Maupassant, 83.  
 Meck, von, 51, 64, 72, 191.  
 Medtner, 283, 307-9.  
 ———, first sonata, 308-9.  
 ———, piano and violin nocturnes, 309.  
 ———, piano and violin sonata, 309.  
 Mendeleieff, 90.  
 Mendelssohn, 122.  
 Mercy-Argenteau (Countess), 81-2, 105, 203.  
 Mey, 93, 128, 130, 185, 211, 215.  
 Meyerbeer, 25, 27-8, 34, 49, 60, 66.  
 Michael Romanoff, 15.  
 Minkus, 95.  
 Moniuszko, 76.  
 Mourometz, 289, 302.  
 Moussorgsky, 38, 63-5, 68, 84, 88, 90-1, 94, 99, 102-4, 108-78, 180-3, 186-9, 193, 195, 199, 203, 247, 251, 253, 263, 265, 293, 316.  
 ———, "Bare Mountain," 127, 150, 206.  
 ———, "Boris Godounoff," 63, 84, 119, 131-52, 162-5, 167, 175-6, 194, 271, 300.  
 ———, "Child's Song," 130, 147.  
 ———, "Classicist," 127, 146.  
 ———, "Don," 127.  
 ———, "Ensigns' Polka," 116.  
 ———, "Fremouchka," 130.  
 ———, "Flea Song," 176.  
 ———, "Han d'Islande," 117.

- Moussorgsky, "Hopak," 128, 136, 175.  
 ———, "Joshua," 175.  
 ———, "Kallistrate," 125.  
 ———, "Khovantchina," 151-66, 174, 177, 189, 318.  
 ———, "Magpie," 127.  
 ———, "Marriage," 128-9, 131, 234.  
 ———, "Mlada," 95-6, 103, 150-1, 175-6, 189.  
 ———, "Night," 125.  
 ———, "Nursery," 125, 130, 147-50.  
 ———, "Œdipus," 120, 251.  
 ———, "Orphan," 129.  
 ———, "Peasant's Cradle-song," 125.  
 ———, "Peep-show," 146-7, 263.  
 ———, "Pictures from an Exhibition," 167-9.  
 ———, "Ragamuffin," 127.  
 ———, "Salammbô," 124, 127, 141, 175.  
 ———, "Saul," 123.  
 ———, "Savichna," 126, 143.  
 ———, "Seminarist," 127.  
 ———, "Sennacherib," 126.  
 ———, "Songs and Dances of Death," 171-4.  
 ———, "Sorotchinsk," 175.  
 ———, "Souvenir of Childhood," 117.  
 ———, "Without Sunlight," 170-1.  
 Moussorgsky, Ph., 115.  
 Mozart, 47, 212-3.  
 ———, "Figaro," 214.  
 Muhler, 306.

## N.

- Napoleon, 75.  
 Napravnik, 81, 100.  
 National Anthem, 56, 58, 60.  
 Nekrassoff, 83, 125, 284.  
 Newmarch, Mrs. Rosa, 295.  
 Nietzsche, 309.  
 Nicholas I, 7, 14, 46, 56-8.

Nikisch, 104.  
 Nikolsky, 131, 141.  
 Nikon, 152-3.

## O.

Obolensky, 117.  
 Ossovsky, 320.  
 Ostrovsky, 54, 125, 197, 269.  
 ———, "Snow-maiden," 301.  
 ———, "Voyevode," 125, 257.  
 Oulibicheff, 47, 66-7.

## P.

Paganini, 254.  
 Patti, 146.  
 Peter the Great, 5-6, 154.  
 Petroff, 175-6.  
 Petrova, 24.  
 Petrovsky, 221.  
 Poe, 286.  
 Pogojeff, 320.  
 Polonsky, 206.  
 Ponchielli, 80.  
 ———, "Gioconda," 80.  
 Popoff, 118, 121.  
 Pougin, 24, 42, 48, 52.  
 Pourgold, 132, 194.  
 Pratsch, 4.  
 Puccini, 128, 318.  
 Pushkin, 5, 15, 20-1, 34-5, 41,  
     78, 83, 104, 127, 131, 133-5,  
     185, 194-5, 206, 213, 216, 231,  
     248, 252, 258, 284, 313.

## R.

Rachmaninoff, 272, 281-6, 293,  
     301, 321.  
 ———, "Aleko," 284, 286.  
 ———, Bohemian caprice, 285.  
 ———, "Covetous Knight,"  
     286.  
 ———, "Fate," 286.  
 ———, first symphony, 285.  
 ———, "Francesca da Rim-  
     ini," 286.  
 ———, "Island of the Dead,"  
     285.

Rachmaninoff, "Lilacs," 286.  
 ———, "Moments Musicaux,"  
     285.  
 ———, piano duets, 286.  
 ———, piano preludes, 286.  
 ———, piano suites, 286.  
 ———, prelude in C sharp  
     minor, 284.  
 ———, second piano concerto,  
     284.  
 ———, second symphony, 285.  
 ———, sonatas, 285-6.  
 ———, "Spring" cantata,  
     284.  
 ———, "The Bells," 286.  
 ———, "The Rock," 285.  
 ———, third piano concerto,  
     285.  
 ———, trio, 285.  
 ———, variations on theme of  
     Chopin, 286.  
 Ralston, 222.  
 Raskolniks, 151, 153.  
 Ravel, 165, 314.  
 Rebikoff, 305-6.  
 ———, "Christmas Tree,"  
     305-6.  
 ———, "Melo-mimics," 306.  
 ———, "Psychological Sket-  
     ches," 305.  
 ———, "Storm," 306.  
 ———, "Thea," 306.  
 ———, "Woman with the  
     Dagger," 306.  
 Repin, 177, 247.  
 Riabinin, 132.  
 Richepin, 83.  
 Rimsky-Korsakoff, 2, 38, 42,  
     63-5, 70-1, 88, 91, 94-5, 100,  
     103-4, 106-7, 113, 126, 129,  
     132, 141, 146, 150, 164-5,  
     179-236, 239-40, 242, 245-9,  
     251, 253, 256-7, 262, 265, 269,  
     272-3, 275, 282-3, 289, 293,  
     301, 303, 305, 307, 313-4, 316,  
     318-20.  
 ———, A., 165.  
 ———, "Antar," 104, 189-91.

- Rimsky-Korsakoff, Belaïeff quartet, 106.  
 ———, "Capriccio Espagnole," 200-1.  
 ———, "Christmas Eve Revels," 206-8.  
 ———, "Doom of Oleg," 235.  
 ———, "Doubinouchka," 235.  
 ———, "Easter" overture, 203.  
 ———, first symphony, 189, 218.  
 ———, folk-song collection (Op. 24), 193.  
 ———, folk-songs for chorus, 235.  
 ———, "Ganges," 235.  
 ———, "Gloria," 235.  
 ———, "Golden Cock," 230-3, 318, 322.  
 ———, "Kitej," 227, 236, 239, 300.  
 ———, "Kostchei," 221-4, 227, 291, 314.  
 ———, "Mlada," 203-6, 208, 219, 221-2, 318.  
 ———, Mme., 129, 194.  
 ———, "Mozart and Salieri," 213-4, 220, 234.  
 ———, "Night," 235.  
 ———, "Night in May," 195-7, 212.  
 ———, "Nymph," 235.  
 ———, oriental song, 235.  
 ———, "Pan Voyevoda," 224-7.  
 ———, piano concerto, 200.  
 ———, "Pskovitianka" ("Ivan the Terrible"), 63, 186-9, 194, 196, 212-6.  
 ———, quartet, 193.  
 ———, "Rose enslaves the Nightingale," 235.  
 ———, "Sadko" (opera), 208-11, 216, 221, 224, 230, 289, 318.  
 ———, "Sadko" (symphonic poem), 183-4, 192.  
 ———, "Scheherazade," 201-2.  
 Rimsky-Korsakoff, second symphony, 190.  
 ———, "Servilia," 219, 221, 227.  
 ———, "Sinfonietta on Russian Themes," 193.  
 ———, "Snowmaiden" ("Snegourochka"), 197-9, 208, 224, 227, 230, 316.  
 ———, symphonic tale ("Russian and Ludmilla"), 194.  
 ———, "Tsar Saltan," 208, 216-8, 221, 224, 227, 230, 318.  
 ———, "Tsar's Betrothed," 211-2, 216.  
 ———, third symphony, 193, 199.  
 ———, "Vera Scheloga," 214-6.  
 ———, violin fantasia, 201.  
 Ristori, 50.  
 Ropartz, 290.  
 Rosen, Baron, 16.  
 Roussel, 300.  
 Rubini, 24.  
 Rubinstein, A., 14, 50, 77, 83-4, 120, 186, 242, 247, 252, 261-3, 271-2.  
 ———, "Demon," 186, 271, 319.  
 ———, N., 83, 199, 262, 272, 274-5.  
 Rurik, 68.  
 S.  
 Safonoff, 200, 275, 291, 293, 301, 308, 321.  
 Schiller, 133, 252.  
 Schnitzler, 306.  
 Schönberg, 292.  
 Schubert, 46.  
 Schumann, 77, 79, 122, 149, 259, 264, 301.  
 ———, "Carnival" 250.  
 Schoberlechner, 31.  
 Scriabin, 3, 282, 292-8, 305-6.  
 ———, first symphony, 294.  
 ———, "Mystery," 297.







